

# Sight and Sound



## COMICS AND MOVIES

'Popeye' to 'Batman Forever'

## ON THE SET

In Gangland Glasgow

## IN INTERVIEW

Zhou Xiaowen and 'Ermo'

## DESOLATION ROW

The unnerving 'Crumb'

## BLADE RUNNING

Cinematic swordplay

## DIRECTOR RON SHELTON

Celebrates Buster Keaton

WILLIAM GIBSON AND ROBERT LONGO ON

# JOHNNY MNEMONIC



# Buster Keaton

Three Ages  
The General  
Steamboat Bill Jr.

plus Premieres of two new  
scores by Richard McLaughlin  
accompanied by Cine Chimera for:

The Navigator  
Our Hospitality

plus Premiere's of two newly  
restored prints from the Champagne  
Piper Heidsieck Classic Film Collection:

Spite Marriage  
The Cameraman

# British Premieres

Carrington Christopher Hampton  
The City of Lost Children Jeunet & Caro  
Conversation with a Cupboard Man Gryzegorzek  
The Colour of Pomegranates Parajanov's cut  
Butterfly Kiss Michael Winterbottom  
The Usual Suspects Bryan Singer  
Rhythm Thief Matthew Harrison  
The Kingdom Lars von Trier  
The Outpost Peter Gothar

# Previews

Eclipse Jeremy Podeswa  
Movie Days Fridrik Thor Fridriksson  
Chungking Express Wong Kar-wai  
Spanking the Monkey David Russell  
Green Firecracker P. Shuang Deng

# Documentaries

The Cuban Excludables Estela Bravo  
Jupiter's Wife Michel Negroponte  
Ecological Design Brian Danitz  
Parajanov Ron Holloway  
The Atlantic Jan Roed

# Shorts Weekend

from around the world over 60 shorts  
retrospective Anglia TV First Take  
highlights Clermont-Ferrand 95

# Retrospectives

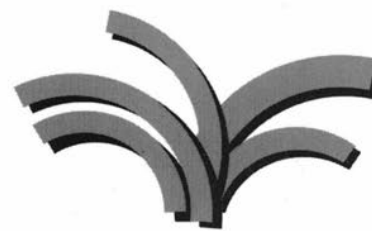
Patricia Rozema  
Lars von Trier

# Education

French Film  
Summer School  
Cambridge University  
for further details ring 01954 210636  
Activities for schools  
Public Debates

more info?  
send A5 SAE to  
The Arts Cinema  
8 Market Passage  
Cambridge CB2 3PF  
phone 01223 352001  
fax 01223 311043

Financial support from the European  
Commission, Eastern Arts Board, Cambridge  
City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council,  
South Cambridgeshire District Council,  
BF1, Canadian High Commission and  
Delegation Culturelle Française



19th  
CAMBRIDGE  
FILM FESTIVAL  
13th - 30th JULY 1995



**Sight and Sound**  
(incorporating Monthly  
Film Bulletin)  
Volume 5 Issue 7 (NS)  
Editorial office:  
21 Stephen Street  
London W1P 1PL  
Telephone 0171 255 1444  
Facsimile 0171 436 2327  
Subscription office:  
01858 468888

**Editorial**  
Editor  
Philip Dodd  
Acting deputy editor  
Nick James  
Associate editor  
Ian Christie  
Acting associate editor  
Leslie Felperin  
Assistant editor  
Rebecca Russell  
Editorial assistant  
Colette O'Reilly  
Contributing editors  
J. Hoberman, Pervaiz Khan,  
John Powers, Mike O'Pray, Tony  
Rayns, Jane Root, Amy Taubin  
Sub-editor  
Mark Sinker  
Picture editor  
Millie Simpson  
Design and art direction  
Susan Buchanan at  
Esterson Lackersteen  
Page make-up  
Spy Graphics  
Origination  
Precise Litho  
Printer  
St Ives plc

**Advertising sales**  
David Thomas  
Telephone 0171 957 8916  
Facsimile 0171 436 2327

**Business**  
Publishing director  
Caroline Moore  
Publishing assistant  
Nichola Bath  
Managing director  
BFI publishing  
Colin MacCabe  
Newsstand distribution  
UMD, Telephone 0171 638 4666  
Bookshop distribution  
Central Books  
Telephone 0181 986 4854  
US distribution  
2nd class postage paid at  
Rahway, NJ, and at additional  
mailing offices. Postmaster:  
send address corrections to  
Sight and Sound, c/o Mercury  
Airfreight International Ltd Inc.,  
2323 Randolph Avenue,  
Avenel, NJ 07001  
Subscription price is \$63.00  
Newsstand distribution by:  
Eastern News Distributors Inc.

**Annual subscription rates**  
UK £29.50  
Europe £36.00  
US/Canada airspeed £36.00  
Overseas surface mail £36.00  
Overseas airmail £61.00  
Special rates apply to BFI  
members  
**Subscription queries**  
For subscription queries and sales  
of back issues and binders contact  
Subscription Department,  
Sight and Sound  
Tower House, Sovereign Park  
Market Harborough  
Leicestershire LE16 9EF  
Telephone 01858 468888  
Facsimile 01858 434958

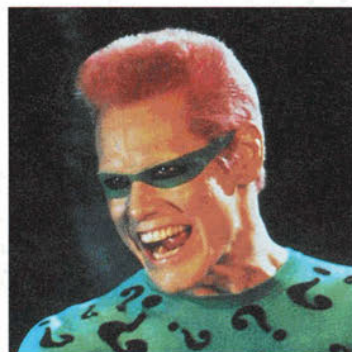
The British Film Institute exists  
to encourage the development  
of film, television and video in the  
United Kingdom, and to promote  
knowledge, understanding and  
enjoyment of the culture of the  
moving image. Its activities  
include the National Film and  
Television Archive; the National  
Film Theatre; the Museum of the  
Moving Image; the London Film  
Festival; the production and  
distribution of film and video;  
funding and support for regional  
activities; Library and Information  
Services; Stills, Posters and  
Designs; Research; Publishing  
and Education; and the monthly  
Sight and Sound magazine

BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE  
bfi  
SIGHT AND SOUND MAGAZINE

Published monthly by the  
British Film Institute  
ISSN 0037-4806

# Sight and Sound

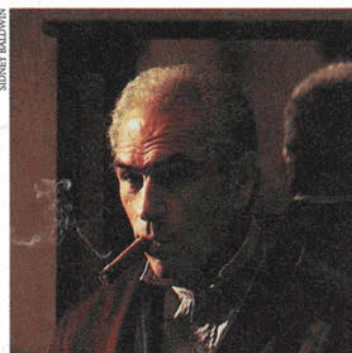
July 1995



'Batman Forever': 12



'Arizona Dream': 39



Tommy Lee Jones in 'Cobb': 42

## Features

**CYBER JOHNNY**  
Is the forthcoming  
*Johnny Mnemonic* the *Blade Runner*  
of the 90s? William Gibson, who  
wrote it, talks with Manohla  
Dargis; Robert Longo, the  
director, discusses the images **6**

**GANGS IN THE HOOD**  
Glasgow in 1968 is the setting  
for the film Gillies MacKinnon  
is shooting. Andrew O'Hagan  
visits the set **8**

**DELIRIOUS INVENTIONS**  
Why have comics and cartoons  
from *Popeye* onwards so often been  
translated into live action movies?  
By Mike Atkinson **12**

**SHEER EXERTION**  
Ron Shelton, director of  
*White Men Can't Jump* and the  
new baseball movie *Cobb*,  
celebrates Buster Keaton.  
Interview by David Weddle **18**

**THE UPS AND DOWNS OF ZHOU XIAOWEN**  
*Ermo*, Zhou Xiaowen's new film,  
has brought him international  
praise, but that shouldn't disguise  
his earlier troubled career.  
He talks with Tony Rayns **22**

**DUELS WITH A CAMERA**  
From Hollywood swashbucklers  
to *D'Artagnan's Daughter*,  
swordplay has been at the  
heart of one strand of cinema.  
Philip Strick investigates **26**

**UNSETTLING MEMORIES**  
A new spate of French movies,  
including *D'Artagnan's Daughter*  
and *La Reine Margot*, are revisiting  
French history. Why?  
By Ginette Vincendeau **30**

**DRAWING IT OUT**  
Robert Crumb, the 60s comic  
artist, is the subject of a new  
and unnerving documentary.  
Screenwriter Michael Eaton  
reflects on cinema,  
madness and family life **34**

## Regulars

**EDITORIAL** Film's a lottery **3**

**BUSINESS** Disney, Miramax  
and *Kids*; Goldfish in Tehran;  
Tilda Swinton and Hollywood **4**

**OBSESSION** David Weddle on  
Marty Feldman **36**

**LETTERS** Ripples at the BBFC,  
the violence debate,  
*Hoop Dreams* **64**

**COVER** Greg Gorman

## Film reviews

|                                                   |    |
|---------------------------------------------------|----|
| Angels                                            | 38 |
| Arizona Dream                                     | 39 |
| Bad Boys                                          | 40 |
| Beyond Rangoon                                    | 41 |
| Cobb                                              | 42 |
| Country Life                                      | 43 |
| Crumb                                             | 44 |
| D'Artagnan's Daughter/<br>La Fille de D'Artagnan  | 45 |
| Destiny Turns on the Radio                        | 45 |
| Eclipse                                           | 46 |
| Ermo                                              | 47 |
| Feast at Midnight, A                              | 48 |
| Fille de D'Artagnan, La/<br>D'Artagnan's Daughter | 45 |
| Guarding Tess                                     | 49 |
| Mangler, The                                      | 50 |
| Man of the House                                  | 51 |
| Miami Rhapsody                                    | 51 |
| Simple Twist of Fate, A                           | 52 |
| Six Degrees of Separation                         | 53 |
| Tank Girl                                         | 54 |
| Tommy Boy                                         | 56 |
| Who's the Man?                                    | 57 |

## Video reviews

|                                                                            |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Mark Kermode and<br>Geoffrey Macnab on this<br>month's video releases      | 58 |
| <b>PRIVATE VIEW</b> Peter Capaldi<br>on <i>Pinocchio</i>                   | 61 |
| <b>ENDNOTES</b> Mark Kermode on the<br>CD of the <i>Barry Lyndon</i> score | 63 |

## Next issue on sale 18 July



'Sherlock Jr.': 18



Germany

**Aguirre, Wrath of God**

Special Herzog double-bill  
Werner Herzog's  
Starring  
Klaus Kinski  
and  
**Land of Silence  
and Darkness**  
Starring  
Josef Bierbichler

TARTAN VIDEO



"A remarkable film.....  
genuinely hypnotic."  
THE GUARDIAN

## AGUIRRE, WRATH OF GOD & LAND OF SILENCE AND DARKNESS

Herzog's sweeping,  
explosive epic. Rich in  
visual imagery, a breath-  
taking journey into the  
heart of darkness that  
provided the inspiration for  
Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*.

"Occupies a unique place in  
the director's oeuvre...  
a flash of brilliance"

LONDON FILM FESTIVAL

CAT No: TVT 1211  
£15.99

**DALLAS  
DOLL**

Sandra Bernhard stars in  
this unusual and  
provocative comedy written  
and directed by Ann Turner,  
the acclaimed, award  
winning director of *Celia*.

"Saucy spectacle of  
sex, sin and skin!  
Bernhard is a riot"

TORONTO STAR

CAT No: TVT 1229  
£15.99

Australia

From the director of *Celia*  
Sandra Bernhard in  
Ann Turner's  
**Dallas Doll**  
Also starring  
Victoria Longley  
Frank Gallacher

TARTAN VIDEO



"Saucy spectacle of sex, sin  
and skin! Bernhard is a riot."  
TORONTO STAR

Germany

Special Herzog double-bill  
Werner Herzog's  
**Woyzeck**  
Starring  
Klaus Kinski  
Eva Mattes  
and  
**Heart of Glass**  
Starring  
Josef Bierbichler

Winner Cannes Film Festival 1979  
Best Supporting Actress

TARTAN VIDEO



"As hard and dazzling  
as a diamond."  
THE OBSERVER

## WOYZECK & HEART OF GLASS

Woyzeck: Klaus Kinski  
stars as a man  
overwhelmed by suffering  
and despair in Herzog's  
powerful and  
dispassionate adaptation  
of Georg Buchner's play.

"The imagery is very  
beautiful...  
the performances  
agonisingly intense"

TIME OUT

CAT No: TVT 1216  
£15.99

**MY  
CRAZY  
LIFE**

From the award winning  
director of  
*Gas, Food, Lodging*,  
Allison Anders' vibrant  
and gritty portrayal of  
girl gangs in  
Los Angeles.

"Lipstick and attitude...  
humour, humanity  
and guns"

INTERVIEW

CAT No: TVT 1214  
£15.99

USA

From the director of  
*Gas, Food, Lodging*  
Allison Anders'  
**My Crazy Life**  
(Mi Vida Loca)  
Starring  
Angel Aviles  
Seidy Lopez

TARTAN VIDEO



"Huge fun,  
energetic and witty."  
Q

**ORDER FORM**

To order simply complete the form below. Make cheques and P.O.'s payable to TARTAN VIDEO LTD.

Total order value £\_\_\_\_\_. I enclose a cheque for the total made payable to Tartan Video Limited, or  
charge my credit card for the total value of £\_\_\_\_\_ ☐ VISA ☐ ACCESS (please tick)

Cat. No: \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Cat. No: \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Cat. No: \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Cat. No: \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Cat. No: \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please cut (or photocopy) the form and return to:  
TARTAN VIDEO LTD., METRO TARTAN HOUSE, 79 WARDOUR ST., LONDON W1V 3TH. Tel: 0171 494 1400

CREDIT CARD HOTLINE!  
Simply call the Sight and Sound + Tartan Video Offer hotline on 0171 437 5695 to order your choices instantly  
(all major credit cards accepted)

P&P RATES: 3 ITEMS OR LESS: UK £2.50 EUROPE £4.00 WORLDWIDE £9.00. 5 ITEMS OR MORE: P&P FREE  
ALLOW 28 DAYS FOR DELIVERY. SPECIAL OFFER VALID UNTIL 31 JULY

ALL TITLES ARE ALSO AVAILABLE FROM  
HMV, VIRGIN, OUR PRICE, TOWER, WH SMITH AND ALL GOOD VIDEO RETAIL OUTLETS

**SPECIAL OFFER**

## A SHORT FILM ABOUT KILLING

From the director of *Three Colours*  
*Red* and *The Double Life of Veronique*,  
Kieslowski demonstrates his skill  
and dexterity as a master of  
suspense whilst producing a  
searing powerful moral indictment  
of capital punishment. Normally  
priced at £15.99 but available to  
Sight & Sound readers for the  
special price of only

**£10.99**

Poland

From the director of  
*Three Colours: Red* and  
*A Short Film About Love*  
Krzysztof Kieslowski's  
**A Short Film About Killing**  
Starring  
Miroslaw Baka  
Krzysztof Globisz

TARTAN VIDEO



"An edgy, raw and challenging  
film of the very highest order."  
TIME OUT



# Film's a lottery

## Contributors to this issue

**Mike Atkinson** writes for *Film Comment*, *Village Voice* and other publications

**Peter Capaldi** has just won an Oscar for Best Short for *Franz Kafka's It's a Wonderful Life*

**Manohla Dargis** is the film editor and chief film critic, *LA Weekly*

**Michael Eaton** is a writer whose scripts include *Fellow Traveller* and the recent BBC series, *Signs and Wonders*

**Andrew O'Hagan** works on the *London Review of Books*. His first book *The Missing* will be published by Picador this autumn

**Tony Rayns** has written widely on cinema. Recently he curated the Korean cinema season at the ICA

**Jonathan Romney** is deputy film critic of *The Guardian*. He is co-editor of

*Celluloid Jukebox*

**Philip Strick**, writer and teacher, is presently editing a BFI Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction Films

**Ginette Vincendeau** is

Professor of Film, University of Warwick

**David Weddle**'s biography of Sam Peckinpah, *"If They Move... Kill 'Em!" The Life and Times of Sam Peckinpah*, was published last year

Five years after Sir Richard Attenborough led a team in to see Mrs Thatcher to ask for government support for the British film industry, the politicians have at last done something for British film. Heritage Minister Stephen Dorrell has testified that his eyes have been opened to the wonders of cinema and that British film deserves encouragement. Most of the measures he announced on the 6 June (aid for the National Film and Television School to move into the Ealing Studios, support for a London Film Commission, £180,000 for the Cinema 100 project) are a slight improvement on the government's former indifference to film. Alone they would be unlikely to bring about the miracle of a revival in British film production.

But Stephen Dorrell has another kind of miracle in his gift: the runaway success – far beyond that projected for it – of the National Lottery. This has enabled him to give what is ostensibly a large amount of money to the industry. On the face of it, his announcement of £70 million to be invested over five years in British film production might seem generous, especially when the average British film budget remains below £2 million. Certainly, in the right hands, it could make an enabling difference, although if you compare the amount to the average budget for a Hollywood movie (between \$15 and \$20 million) it can hardly be a decisive one, and shouldn't be overrated, especially when insiders are predicting a substantially larger National Lottery investment in Opera.

The government has given the responsibility for allocating the £70 million to the Arts Council, an organisation with a historical commitment to the Fine Arts rather than to the hurly-burly world of film finance and film-making. It is said that the Council's film board will operate along the lines of British Screen, investing in films which have

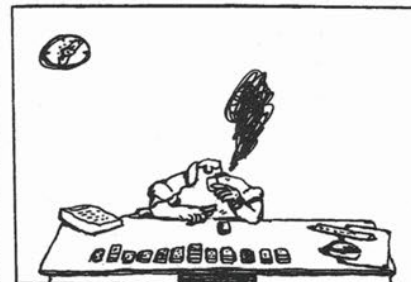
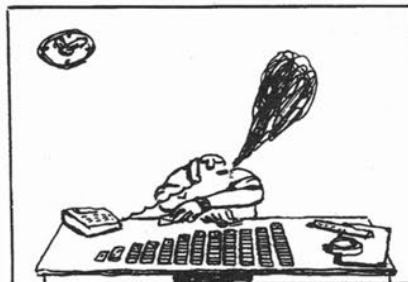
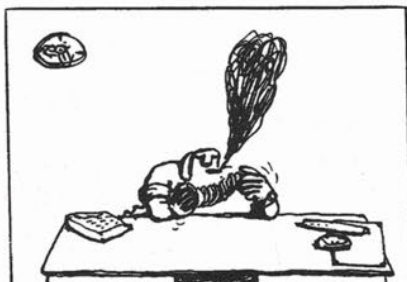
already attracted most of their finance and which the Council board are certain will be financially successful. In Dorrell's vision then, we have a new quango topping up the budgets of films that would have been made anyway. It is fairly easy to imagine such a panel of the great and the good dispensing their wisdom. But is this what's needed in the mid 1990s?

The world has changed a great deal since this process of lobbying the government began. The major Hollywood studios now dominate film distribution worldwide to an extent unimaginable even five years ago. One model of the British film that fits into Hollywood's new niche-marketing philosophy is the costume drama: Nicholas Hytner's *The Madness of King George*, for example, or Christopher Hampton's forthcoming *Carrington*. This model also happens to be the one that apparently led to Stephen Dorrell's conversion to the cause. But is it this kind of cinema that the £70 million will go to support? If so, what about other kinds of British cinema? Will those films which imagine their heritage to include *Get Carter* be looked upon sympathetically? Or those that cite *Witchfinder General*? Or the Gainsborough Melodramas? Or the films that came out of the 80s Workshops movement?

Rather than having the good and the great exercise their taste in dispensing the £70 million, why doesn't the Arts Council directly fund a panel of producers working at ground level – say Steve Woolley (*Interview with the Vampire*), Nadine Marsh Edwards (*Bhaji on the Beach*), Jeremy Bolt (*Shopping*), Julie Baines (*Butterfly Kiss*) and Keith Griffiths (*Street of Crocodiles*) – with a remit to bring on new talent? No one will begrudge Hytner and Hampton their chance to build on the success of their films as long as opportunities exist for more imaginative and riskier strains of British films to emerge.

## JERRY ON LINE #1

Peter Lydon – James Sillavan ©



'Jerry, start a rumour that I'm being pursued to head-up Universal. Then start another, suggesting I'm on the verge of signing. Rumour number 3 will say I've pulled out because of loyalty to this place. The result? Our stock goes up and Tom Hanks will return my calls.'



# The business

● Readers who both buy their popcorn and stop talking by the time the film starts may have noticed a rather incongruous image before the main title of *Pulp Fiction*: the logo of Buena Vista, the distribution arm of the Walt Disney Company. The reason why the same company that distributes *Mickey Mouse* and *The Lion King* should also be looking after Mr Tarantino's, er, fashionable film relates directly, of course, to what this column is about: it is the outcome of a smart business move a couple of years ago whereby Disney acquired Miramax Films, the brash independent distribution outfit headed by Bob and Harvey Weinstein.

In a few short years, Miramax had all-but revolutionised US distribution, thanks to its ability to succeed with the kind of films that Hollywood has always said it wanted to make but never does (compare in this respect *El Mariachi* with the drab, studio-produced upcoming sequel *Desperado*).

Disney's Jeffrey Katzenberg was the motivating force behind the Miramax acquisition and (contrary to industry speculation – which suggested that either Disney would emasculate Miramax or else the studio's money would go to the Weinsteins' heads) the deal has so far worked out pretty well: Disney have left Miramax to get on with things ("things" now encompassing a healthy production programme, including *Pulp Fiction*, *Pret-a-Porter* and such upcoming titles as *Things to Do in Denver When You're Dead* and *Restoration*), while Miramax has pretty repeatedly delivered the goods, most notably with the \$100-million-plus *Pulp Fiction*.

This year, however, signs of a deterioration in the relationship have begun to appear, fuelled by recent Miramax acquisitions and rumours that Katzenberg – who, of course, was ousted from Disney late last summer – wanted to lure Miramax over as the distribution (and possibly foreign sales) arm of DreamWorks, the company he set up with Steven Spielberg and David Geffen after his departure.

It is a seductive scenario: there is little synergy between the increasingly corporate Disney and the abrasively maverick Miramax. And, suggest some sources, the acquisition of such titles as *Priest* (which caused an extraordinary kerfuffle in the US, with denunciations from the pulpit, picketing and paid radio campaigns) and *Kids* (which, with its scenes of underage sex, seems certain to get much the same treatment) were not just motivated by a desire for quality films. They were also films which the Disney management, with its lifelong commitment to family values, would not be able to stomach. Certainly, *Priest* – to which Miramax, with its usual



Young and on the screen: the controversial 'Kids'

flair for newsmaking campaigns, initially allotted a Good Friday opening date – caused considerable embarrassment in the Magic Kingdom.

Miramax has what DreamWorks wants: an innovative approach to the distribution of what one might call "sidestream" films. And DreamWorks has what Miramax needs, now that its \$10-billion equity base is pretty much in place. Miramax are currently denying the rumours. But then they would, wouldn't they?

**F**ootnote to part of the above. 'Priest', which was condemned by conservative Catholic groups in the US (almost none of whom bothered to see the film) was, by contrast, a huge success in the overwhelmingly Catholic Republic of Ireland, where it was even on occasion recommended from the pulpit as a sensitive treatment of a difficult but important subject. Far be it from Mr Busy to support the Church. But good on you, Father.

● At last! Proof that reading film books is good for you! Three years ago, Iranian film student Jafar Panahi was reading Buñuel's autobiography *My Last Breath*, and came across the bit where Buñuel rings up Jean Epstein out of the blue and asks him for a job. It worked: the young Spaniard's first credits were as assistant director on Epstein's *Mauprat* (1926) and *La Chute de la maison d'Usher* (1928).

Emboldened by the story, Panahi called up his own idol, Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami, and left a message

saying he wanted to work on Kiarostami's next film in any capacity he cared to name. The director called back and, after some discussion, Panahi ended up being Kiarostami's assistant on *Through the Olive Trees*.

During the course of the shoot, Panahi told his mentor about a full-length film he wanted to make: the story of a little girl who sets off on the Iranian New Year's Day – 21 March, the first day of spring – to buy a goldfish, a traditional part of the New Year's celebrations.

Kiarostami was so taken by the story and the way Panahi told it that he promised not only to help his young

protégé find a producer, but to write the screenplay as well – a move which, in the cash-strapped world of Iranian art cinema, more or less guaranteed the film would get made. And it was.

The story, however, gets better – the film was subsequently picked for the Directors' Fortnight at Cannes – and better: *Badkonake sefid* (*The White Balloon*) became the most talked-about movie of the first week of the festival, was sold more widely than any Iranian film in recent memory and, as the festival closed, won the Caméra d'Or, the prestigious award for the best first film in any of the official selections, beating such other high-profile contenders as *Kids*, *Carrington*, *The Madness of King George*, *Heavy*, *Mute Witness* and *Soul Survivor*.

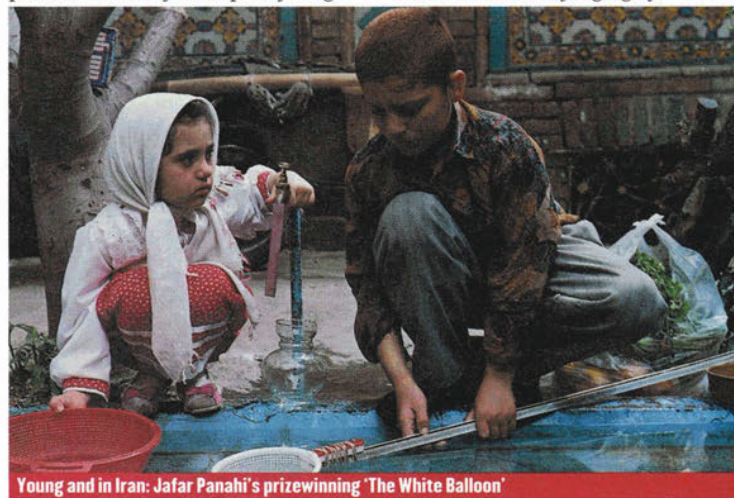
Previous winners include Jim Jarmusch (*Stranger Than Paradise*), Mira Nair (*Salaam Bombay!*) and Tran Anh Hung (*The Scent of Green Papaya*).

**G**oing Hollywood 1: After a decade or more of fiercely independent production, mainly in his native Toronto, Canadian director Atom Egoyan has finally accepted the blandishments of the big time and signed up to direct 'Dead Sleep', a psychological thriller for Warner Bros. The film is the story of a female attorney who specialises in euthanasia cases but falls in love with one of her clients, who is suspected of having put his wife into a coma. No cast members have yet been announced, but production is expected to start this autumn.

● Going Hollywood 2: Tilda Swinton's first US film will be the thriller *Female Perversions*, based on the novel by Louise Kaplan, which is nearing the end of its shoot in Los Angeles and also stars Amy Madigan, Karen Sillas and Frances Fisher.

*Female Perversions* is the story of a female attorney (yes, another one: since *The Client*, aggressive legal dames have become a Hollywood sub-genre) whose sexual appetites get in the way of her ambition to become a judge.

US release will be via the respectable art-house distributor October Films, but the foreign emphasis will be on the erotic content, judging by



Young and in Iran: Jafar Panahi's prizewinning 'The White Balloon'



co-producer and foreign sales agent Trans Atlantic Entertainment's Cannes pitch for the film.

**O**stensibly in Cannes to accompany Sam Raimi's disappointing Western, *The Quick and the Dead* (which closed the Official Selection but was not in competition), Sharon Stone quickly became the festival's most readily visible star. (Pamela Anderson attracted most of the paparazzi attention and was thus more visible but is less of a star.)

Stone popped up hosting the American Federation for Aids Research fund-raising dinner at the Moulin de Mougins and did kissy-kissy with Greta Scacchi, thus laying to rest an apparently long-running rumour of a dispute over the casting of *'Basic Instinct'*. (I say "apparently" because the rumour had not previously strayed into Mr Busy's shell-likes. He is, however, happy both to discover it and dismiss it all in the same paragraph.)

A few days later, there was Ms Stone again, smuggling up to Emir Kusturica after handing him the Palme d'Or for *'Underground'*. It paid dividends, too. While Kusturica is not a name that says much to picture editors, Sharon Stone is, and the photo duly ended up on Monday's front pages – not a place where, outside France, the Palme d'Or usually gets much of a look-in.

● When first he set foot on Californian soil many years ago, Mr Busy immediately headed off to the lonely intersection near San Luis Obispo where Earl Turnpuess's station wagon collided with James Dean's Porsche Spyder 40 years ago this September. So he has kept a watchful

eye on the stop-start development of the Dean biopic. Produced by Marvin Worth (*Malcolm X*), written by Israel Horowitz and set to star (after two years of rumours) Leonardo DiCaprio, it is now to be directed (following the departure of Michael Mann) by Marc Rocco, whose *Murder in the First* will be released here later this year.

Imagine my surprise, then, to learn of a second Dean biopic – and, what is more, the only one to be authorised by the James Dean Foundation (I'd never heard of this, either). It has been written and, if they make their announced 1 July start date, will now be being directed by TV director Alan Hauge, who has covered himself against the collapse of the project by also acquiring the movie rights to the Lorena Bobbitt story.

Dean will be played by one Damian Chapa, whose highest-profile outing to date has been as parent-slaying Lyle Menendez in the CBS miniseries *Menendez: A Killing in Beverly Hills*.

Hauge is a little cagey about where the money for his film (he claims \$25 million) is coming from, but expects to have it in release in time for Oscar consideration (i.e. before the end of the year). Worth, meanwhile, has Warner Bros behind his version, and also expects to shoot this summer.

**A** confirmed European, Mr Busy feels he must nonetheless observe that the latest squabbles over the MEDIA 2 programme – the one which supports (or some such word) the

audiovisual industries – do not augur well for a united continent.

It was perhaps inevitable that, with the French taking over the presidency of the European Union just as the whole MEDIA programme was being revamped, things would get bumpy. So it has proved, with the French national film body, the CNC, springing a new scheme on their partners at a private, 17 May private meeting in Cannes, then telling everyone their scheme had been accepted.

Not so, spluttered Dieter Kosslick, head of both the North-Rhine Westfalia Film Fund (a cash-rich German local government initiative which has backed more films than any equivalent body in Europe) and that key MEDIA organisation The European Film Distribution Office. "People just listened politely. There was no discussion," he told John Hopewell at *'Moving Pictures'*.

For those with an interest in the vagaries of European politics, Mr Busy should explain that the French proposal (very similar to their own national *avance sur recettes* scheme) is based on automatic aid repaid in proportion to the film's performance at the box office, while the existing European system is decided by a panel once the film has a distributor in at least three countries.

Further explanation of the intricacies and implications of all this in the wild and much-travelled world of European cultural politics would take the rest of this issue of S&S. But be reassured, dear reader, this one is more dramatic than the veal-crates row, more sexy than the Spanish fishermen dispute. It will run and run.



Dilys Powell (1901-1995)

● Finally, I would like to pay my own quiet tribute to Dilys Powell, who died just as this column was going to press.

No personal reminiscences here, however: just the fond recollection that, in the days when I was doing programme-note research on a whole range of classic movies (early David Lean films, Anthony Mann Westerns and 1950s crime thrillers dismissed, on first release, as genre rubbish), it was invariably Dilys Powell – and usually Dilys Powell alone – who spotted the future classic among the also rans, whose weekly reviews were the most timeless and least tied to the fashionable rhetoric of the day.

## CANNES NOTES

# Overground

Only one Hollywood studio film (*Ed Wood*) showed up in Competition at Cannes this year, though there were three more – *Desperado*, *Kiss of Death* and *The Quick and the Dead* – in the Special Screening slots. *Ed Wood* opened in the US before Christmas, the Americans thought it was a low key Festival: "mostly empty", *Variety* called it. Maybe it was for some. Not for me, however – not after seeing Emir Kusturica's *Underground*.

Let's start with the Hollywood films. Much as I liked *Ed Wood* – it would be impossible not to – *Kiss of Death* seemed to me the most interesting: a dizzying combination of action and metaphysics confirming Barbet Schroeder as one of a handful of European directors able both to deliver the Hollywood goods and preserve a personal voice.

Of the high-profile Competition movies, Ken Loach's Spanish Civil War saga *Land and Freedom* – scandalously passed over in the main prize ceremony – is his largest-scale work since TV's *Days of Hope* and arguably

his first feature since *Kes* in which an instinctive flair for storytelling really fuses with a need to make clear a political position. Sad, though, that he should do his best work when in elegiac mode.

Christopher Hampton's directorial debut *Carrington* was a quiet and sustained pleasure – a very British film (almost apologetic camera movements, close attention to the details) but streets ahead of the Merchant/Ivory *tableaux vivants* with which it will inevitably be compared. Colleagues claimed it was "hardly directed", but you don't get a performance like Jonathan Pryce's Lytton Strachey without first-class direction.

Other pleasures came from stage legend Robert Lepage's feature debut, *Le Confessionnel*, a cool and (for Lepage) remarkably unmannered piece of storytelling in the Director's Fortnight; Anthony Waller's *Mute Witness* (Critics' Week), a thriller about a mute make-up woman pursued through the Moscow night by

murderers, the mob and more or less everyone, which was scary, hilarious and much cleverer than *Pulp Fiction*; and Manoel de Oliveira's more than usually idiosyncratic meditation on good and evil, *O convento* (in Competition, where it was translated as *The Convent*, though it should really be *The Monastery*), which was booed by some but which I found quite wonderful (if totally daffy).

The real high spots, though, were Jafar Panahi's *Badkonake sefid* (*The White Balloon*), which won the Caméra d'Or for best first film, and *Underground*, which walked off with the Palme d'Or.

The simple story of a little girl trying to buy a goldfish in Tehran, *The White Balloon* is a reminder of just how powerful simple camera set-ups and classical cinematic storytelling can be. It is also helped by the extraordinary presence of seven-year-old Aida Mohammadkhani, who is on-screen for almost the entire film, and who combines the face of a child robbed of its teddy bear with a voice like a buzz-saw and a steely determination that

Rupert Murdoch would envy.

But *Underground* was the film that made Cannes worthwhile for me this year and that finally, two days before the end, brought the Competition to life. Three-and-a-quarter hours of passionate hysteria, it tells the history of Yugoslavia (the working title was *Once Upon a Time There Was a Country*) from the Nazi invasion through to the present day. From the opening air raid in Belgrade zoo through to the final image – a visual conceit so astounding and so perfectly realised that I would prefer to let viewers discover it for themselves – Kusturica piles image on image, capturing the contradictions of the resistance, the Tito era and the war in Bosnia with a fierceness, a commitment and a sustained energy that leaves no room for post-modern equivocation.

In a decade or so of university teaching, I must have asserted a hundred times that art could provide the ultimate high, but I don't know if I ever really believed it. *Underground* taught me it is true. Nick Roddick



● Nothing being staler than tomorrow's news, imagining a credible future is sensationally hard. Godard did it with a poverty of means in *Alphaville*; Kubrick, with more cash, made it happen twice. For *Johnny Mnemonic*, artist Robert Longo's feature film debut, the future is where couriers dump childhood memories to upload for hire. Loosely based on an early short story by cyberpunk SF novelist William Gibson, who also wrote the screenplay, it stars Keanu Reeves as the titular blank slate, dressing like one of Sinatra's Rat Pack and delivering compound data like so much fast food.

When Johnny takes a job that literally threatens to blow his mind (he's taken one byte too many), it isn't long before he's on the run with a cyberpunkette named Mary, dodging the yakuza. As it turns out, Johnny's uploaded no less than the antidote to a Post-modern Plague, a virus known as Nerve Attenuation Syndrome. As it also turns out, Big Business is invested more in the problem than in the solution. And so Johnny runs, finding himself surfing the information underground, allied with rebels called Loteks and searching for answers.

"We were looking for something that conveyed more a sense of nostalgia for the future than a futuristic look," says Gibson, speaking about the film's fusion of the new with the old, the highest tech with the lowest. "The world of *Johnny Mnemonic* is a world where the capital F future isn't going to arise, which I think is pretty much our situation today in 1995: we've given up on *The Jetsons*."

Gibson himself seems less interested in the future itself than in desires for it. "The old futures have a way of hanging around", he explains, "and I find that very poignant. We wanted to scatter that feeling through the film. There's a sense of dead technology and dead platforms, as they say in the computer-game business. This is like a world built out of eight-track tape recorders." He adds, "I think now that everyone sort of knows that the real future is going to be cluttered with all the same junk we have today, except it will be old and beat up and there will be more of it."

*Johnny Mnemonic* is the first of Gibson's published works to make it to celluloid. Though for years Kathryn Bigelow's name was linked to another Gibson short story, *New Rose Hotel*: Gibson says the last person he'd heard was looking at it was Abel Ferrara. "He had a very dark, extremely dark script that had been written by Zoë Lund," says Gibson. "Dark and scary."

Gibson describes his relationship to *Johnny Mnemonic* and Longo in unusually happy terms: certainly happy for a screenwriter. It's telling that when the pair talk about their moviemaking experiences, they invariably use the plural. As for the production, Gibson admits to having been "involved to an abnormal extent, by Hollywood standards. Since we were an artist and a novelist making a feature film we invented our own working relationship, which isn't at all the way it usually goes. I doubt having done it that way I'd want to do it the straight way." He continues: "Going back to writing something and handing it in and waiting to see what they do with it doesn't seem interesting."

*Johnny Mnemonic* opens in October

# CYBER

A novelist and an artist have made the new film 'Johnny Mnemonic'



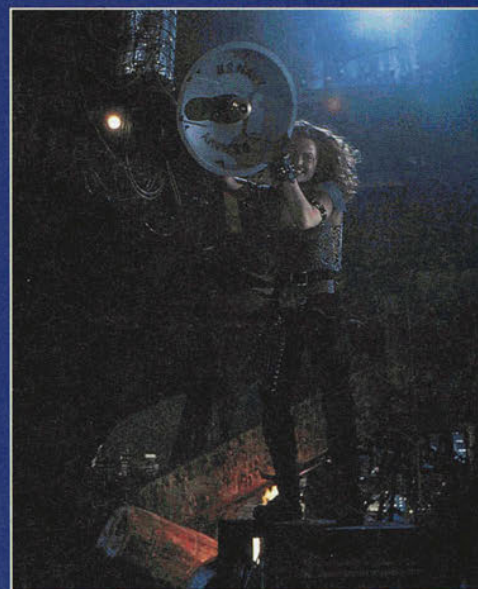
## COMPUTER ANIMATION

There are about 160,000 single frames in the movie, and with each one I tried to take control. With cyberspace I had real specific ideas. I wanted all the computer graphics stuff to be designed by different companies, so that there wasn't an overall style. Each graphics had its purpose and identity. The first one, the upload in the hotel suite, is done by this small group in Toronto, very raw. The cyberspace scene, which is like the trademark Gibson image – the more institutional consensus hallucination of all known human information – was done by a kind of more institutional production company, Sony Image Work. They had big, monstrous computers. We worked endlessly to make a space that went on forever, that had the feeling that you could look down, up. At the same time, there's this whole idea of dealing with technology casually, that this is just an extension of your PC, that you're doing work rather than having an acid trip.



## MOVIE LOVE

I made people watch about 20 movies that were archetypes, things I was going to rip off and things I didn't want. I didn't want 'Demolition Man'; I aspired to 'Blade Runner', but we couldn't make 'Blade Runner'. 'Blade Runner' gives you that incredible shot of Los Angeles, of the world being built outside, so our job was to give you the world inside, inside the machine. The other movies that were important were 'Alphaville' and 'Touch of Evil'. And 'Brazil'. I made Keanu look at Fast Eddie in 'The Hustler'. I made a secret black-and-white movie; I have a copy of the black-and-white dub print, which is kind of cool.



## ACTION!

We made the whole movie slightly off. There's longer pacing between the action beats, and when the action actually happens we wanted it upfront. I wanted to start off with slow motion and then go right to real time, not overemphasise it. I didn't want the gore; both William and I have kids. Violence and sex are probably two things that people don't do a lot of, that's why they want to see hyperreality at the movies. Action is choreography. That I appreciate, but it was painfully long and boring. Violence is very orchestrated in movies, and I'm not interested in spending a lot of time on it. The hero of this movie has a gun for about ten seconds and it doesn't work and he doesn't shoot anybody, he misses them. There's irony to it. Whatever else, this is a mutant movie, the casting is an example: my wife [Barbara Sukowa] played Rosa Luxemburg and Dolph Lundgren played 'Masters of the Universe'. It's a bizarre combination of people, it's not an Arnold Schwarzenegger movie.



## DOLPH, THE ANTI-CHRIST

He's like a Germanic version of Jesus. Albrecht Dürer's version of Jesus, that's basically what we wanted.



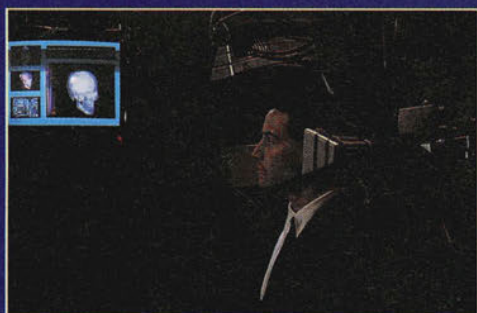
# JOHNNY

SF writer William Gibson talks to Manohla Dargis. Director Robert Longo reflects on the images



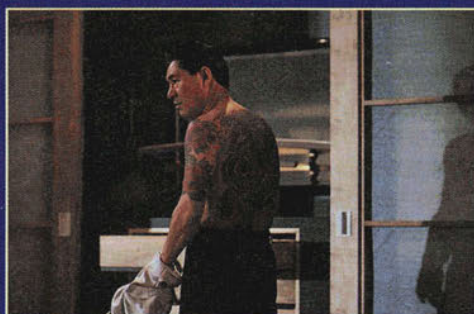
## MISE EN SCENE

This is a low-budget movie with an ambition to be bigger. I had a great production designer, Nilo Rodis-Jamero, who knew my work. I gave him a lot of art books to look at, while he made me always aware that I was making a low-budget movie. I wanted to make a clunky movie. I didn't have the time to make, and because I had a lot of people to deal with, I didn't want to make an overtly stylish movie. I didn't want to make an MTV movie. The one thing I did have to do was that in every scene I had to have a "wow" shot. I had to have a beauty shot; and maybe half of them made it into the movie. The fishbowl gag was that when Johnny goes up to the bowl you see his head "explode", but at the same time it was a chance to get to see a little bit of the humanity in him since he waves at the kid. I always thought of the opening of this scene with people bowing as my homage to Bertolucci and 'The Conformist', only in Beijing.



## CYBERPUNK

I'm not impressed with technology. I'm still a believer in the Rosetta Stone. I have to print hard copies of everything; I use a powerbook because there's a spell check, but I'm not impressed. The idea is that in a computer with a "squid" (a super quantum interferon device), you can go into your computer and track down anything that's been dumped because they're ghosts. A Squid is comparable to pulling a whisper out of a cheering stadium. The idea of this future is that the only way to safeguard stuff is to transport it within a human being. The irony is that with computers everyone is always talking about more memory, and here's this guy who downloads his whole memory. I thought that was really interesting.



## "BEAT" TAKESHI

Takeshi is a cross between Edward G. Robinson, George Raft and Clint Eastwood, he's a bit stoic. I've been a big fan of his movies, and I've been in Japan a lot so I've seen his television shows. We knew he wanted to make an American movie, but I had to go see him. I went to meet him after I did a museum show in Korea and I ended up going to his house for dinner. His agents and his managers had never been to his house. They came along but he made them sit in a closet while we had dinner. That night he gave me this beautiful vase. The next day his manager called me and said that when I took it through customs I shouldn't tell them Takeshi gave it to me: "Just tell them you bought it in a shop, because it was made by one of the National Treasures." Takeshi was very involved in the authenticity of the yakuza; the tattoo is an authentic design. The scene took so long. We had to get it designed, then put on. It was important that there was this incredible, glorious armour underneath Takeshi's clothing.



## KEANU'S FACE

He doesn't think that he's beautiful, he's very unassuming. It's great that he has a slight Asian edge to him; and his control of his weight is great. He lost weight over the course of the film. We had thought about this, but it comes across even more: he looks even younger at the end of the movie, which is kind of cool since that's when he gets his memory back.



## DYSTOPIA

Chris Marker's 'La Jetée' is where we started, the way he sits there with the pads on his eyes. One of the things that we decided is that we're nostalgic for the future. I just wanted to create a kind of Frankenstein image - except with his head. I mean, this is a movie about a guy's head.



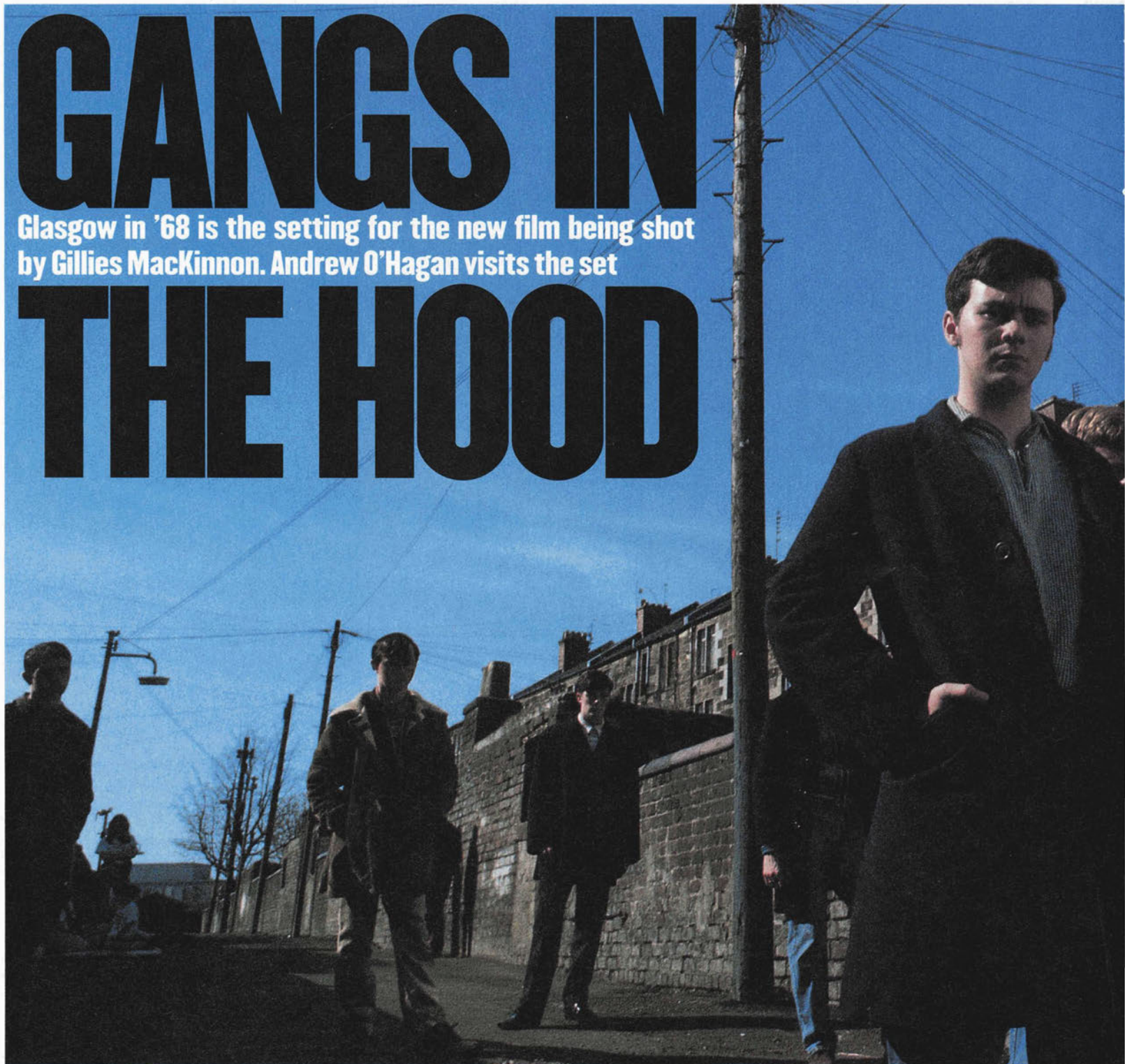
## SERMON ON THE MOUNT

We called this scene 'The Little Prince' speech. I realised that I wanted to give Johnny something where he could explode, and I kept trying to think of an action movie that has a guy who says, "I've fucking had it! I want to go home, I don't want this!" I had just gotten one of my kids 'The Little Prince', so the cover gave me the idea, I told William about it and he wrote the notes that night on the back of an envelope. We shot it and didn't tell anyone about it, the studio didn't know. The other versions of the scene were even more insane. Rather than having this gradual insanity he was totally schizzed out, going totally nuts. This Johnny Mnemonic is like Gibson on steroids.



# GANGS IN THE HOOD

Glasgow in '68 is the setting for the new film being shot by Gillies MacKinnon. Andrew O'Hagan visits the set



● 1968 was, as everybody knows, a very good year for bad behaviour. Those sharp-suited Kray Twins appeared at Bow Street Magistrates' Court in May, on a first charge of conspiracy to murder. But despite everything, the brothers were to enjoy the continued affection of their people. As his hearse cut through the crowds of Bethnal Green, I recalled something Ronnie wrote in his autobiography, something that allowed you to think he might have understood a thing or two about people and violence.

He was moaning about the blurb on the video cover of *The Krays*, Peter Medak's 1990 movie about his and Reggie's glamorous life. The blurb said: *If people are afraid of you, you can do anything*. Ronnie was not best pleased. "But we didn't operate like that," he wrote; "We used

respect, not fear. There is a big difference."

Glasgow in 1968 was a place where many would've acknowledged that distinction. A sort of horrible respect gathered at the time around big-noise criminals like Arthur Thompson, and it was a slender code at the heart of gang wars between the youngsters of Cranhill and Easterhouse. Whatever was happening elsewhere in the world that year, in Glasgow, and on the front of the *Daily Record*, there was news of razor-slashing young gangs scouring the city in search of some terrifying character known only as "The Face". The levels of violence involved in that sort of life (and seriousness, and strategy) could graduate from nought to plenty. For most of those charging about and hurting on the newish housing schemes, though, it was all

to do with bravado and small glory; just a way of passing the time, and perhaps of making a name for yourself along the way.

Gillies MacKinnon's new film – financed by BBC Scotland, BBC Films and the Glasgow Film Fund – is now taking shape in Glasgow. Set in 1968, it is about the McGraths, three brothers growing up together, and being touched, to a lesser or greater extent, by gang violence. It is set in a housing scheme very like that of the famous Easterhouse. The script was written by Billy MacKinnon, the director's brother, and is drawn partly from their own experience. The story is an unusual one, told mainly via the youngest of the boys, Lex, who likes to paint pictures. The film emerging looks intimate and vivid. Like most of MacKinnon's work so far, it





Mean streets: the dark side of '68 in Glasgow, a vicious world of gangs and young men, is explored in Gillies MacKinnon's as-yet untitled new film

involves itself fairly deeply in troubled lives, and it takes to do with an area of Britain that has been comprehensively knocked about.

*Needle*, the film he made from a script by Jimmy McGovern, was set in Liverpool, and it follows the agony of a young ferry conductor; he's trying to build a life with his girl, but it's increasingly hampered by drug addiction, then ruined by prison. MacKinnon interests you in human situations, and the settings are most often just places like many others. He tends not to characterise areas, or make much of their blight: instead he concentrates on the lives themselves. He has a firm way with understatement. *Conquest of the South Pole*, made for the BBC in 1989, is about a group of jobless young guys in Leith who want more than anything to piss

off to the South Pole. MacKinnon has a feeling, a fine empathy, for the ways that entrapment can work. He is also awake to the complications of loyalty and tradition, and the new film, with a slow and careful touch, seems set to underline these concerns of his.

I was on my way to visit the set. It turned out the cabdriver had lived in Easterhouse for 20 years, and brought up three children there. "A lot of the fighting," he said, "it was just a carry-on. They didn't know what they were doing." I told him about the film. "Aye, I heard about that," he said. "Wonder what they'll make? Surely, it must be better than what Frankie Vaughan did."

"Eh?" I met his eyes in the mirror.

"Frankie Vaughan, you know? The straw hat

and the cane? He came to Easterhouse in the late 60s, with a big oil drum, and all the kids who'd knives and machetes, all the gangsters, had to put their weapons into it. The publicity he got was unbelievable. An amnesty. All the papers were there. He was supposed to have been a London gangster when he was young, and he understood them."

I was still laughing about this when he dropped me in Cecil Street. Half of the street is subsidising; the other half, which is being renovated, is beginning to look a fairly attractive terrace. This part of Glasgow – near the University and the Botanic Gardens and the BBC headquarters – could be described as the opposite of Easterhouse. The film is not being shot in Easterhouse, and they are using flats like the one in Cecil Street for the interior scenes.

I met MacKinnon just inside the flat, and was admiring a panelled door on the set when he came up. He looks like a greying Stephen Rea, or else a social worker (which is what he used to be). He was all go. They were shooting the last two scenes of the film, and he encouraged me to find a decent spot. The flat was crammed, so I hid in the corner, jammed between an old bakelite telephone and a bundle of coats. It was a wise option. From where I crouched I could watch how the shot was shaping up on the monitor, and watch it in the flesh as well. MacKinnon sat in front of the little screen, scratching his chin, concentrating, and drumming out a beat on the lid. Lex, the main character, is 13, and he's played by Iain Robertson, a robust little guy who looks right pleased to have the part. He's very good too; he deploys a Glaswegian's soft smirk, and has a quick, smart, dangerous look about the eyes. An assistant director standing near my corner told me Iain was just right. "He's funny as well," the guy said, "a right wee wind-up merchant."

The set's detail is just as it should be. Wallpaper and carpets make a happy mismatch; the coats on the hooks are bright, their collars wide and usually trimmed with fur. Vince Hill records are scattered under an old Dansette; headboards stand very square and unadorned. Lex is wearing a yellow and brown stripy jumper, the kind of garment most people still haven't forgiven their mother for making them wear. It looks pretty much like 1968, and the crew are ready to go. Lex will come out of his bedroom, look down towards the kitchen, where his mum Lorna is dancing and carrying on with his Uncle Andrew. It is a room Lex used to share with his two older brothers, before measures of gangsterism and Art School pulled them all apart. The script says Lex is drawn out of the room, away from his drawing, by an eruption of laughter. MacKinnon worries over the quality of the laugh – the pitch of it, the length and timing of it. They rehearse, then shoot it a few times. MacKinnon drums with his fingers, walks around fixing details, queries the lighting, and then shoots the scene again. Lex's easel accidentally crashes from the desk. "Oh oh," MacKinnon says, "Auto-Destructive Art."

The film's producer is Steve Clark-Hall. "I don't think this is a gang film," he says. "It's about brothers, and though the texture of the film is Glaswegian, I think the story would ►



◀ work as well in London or New York or in Hong Kong. The texture has to do with certain sorts of language, certain sorts of humour. There's a sort of political correctness around that says, 'There's a correct way to be Scottish, and an incorrect way to talk about Scotland.' I deplore that. I don't understand it."

You can see what he's getting at. There has, over the last decade or so, been a new attitude of inverted cultural snobbery which sets one kind of Scottish experience against another. The newer sort of urban realism places working-class life over everything else, and holds other representations – whether in writing or painting or cinema – to be bogus and compromised and tainted with English Toryism and technical orthodoxy. For example, the novelist James Kelman, about to win the Booker Prize, still spoke of himself as a marginalised writer, ignored as the voice of his people was ignored. Clark-Hall's point is fair enough: it's sensible to think that there might be ways of capturing Scottish character and experience that step beyond the programmes of the prolier-than-thou; it may be possible to render something of the life of Glasgow that does not diminish the levels of ambivalence or prejudice or self-invention that exist there, as they do everywhere. But Glasgow is not a totality, however many talented cultural warlords – in their need to name the insidious, totalising enemy – tend to make it into one. The *Easterhouse* film seems open-minded, and is working against the grain of this tendency.

I sat with Billy MacKinnon in the lunch bus. He'd just come back from the Hebrides, and looked a bit wind-buffed. The eyes were wider and the hair a lot madder, but there was no mistaking him for anybody but Gillies' brother. They'd worked together before, on a film called *Passing Glory* (1986), with Billy as producer. They made that when Gillies was still at film school. Billy told me he was 15 in 1968; he'd been born into a family he described as being "respectable working class". They were living that year in Govanhill, and Billy was a nervous, fairly hyperactive boy. The surrounding area was "gang infested"; it was a time that was "superheated". The gang thing around the brothers – as around all brothers in those areas, at that time – was very strong. "It was a very restless year," Billy said, "it was the same year as the Tet Offensive, Paris, the Prague Spring. You'd have these boys with sideburns, carrying razors, but they knew all about Ho Chi Minh. It was a vortex that sucked in all sorts of kids. There were gains to be had, self-respect to be had, and girls."

In his script, the McGrath brothers are drawn into the activities of the gangs sometimes unwittingly, sometimes against their better judgment. It was as if you just couldn't avoid being touched by violence, whether you wanted to be involved or not. Billy said that's how it was. Those gangs, with their crazy, comically ferocious names – The Glen, The Cumbie, The Priesty, The Fleet – had the run of the city, and any night at the close of the 60s the place would be swelling with them.

I asked him what it was like working with his brother. "Really good," he said. "We talked about it four years ago, and then, last year,

Gillies started sending me these big faxes to Sydney, where I live, and I'd send ones back to him in London. This went on for ages, then I took them all off to Italy, and wrote the script." The MacKinnon brothers both went to Art School, and there's a lot of painting in the *Easterhouse* film. (I call it that because they've still not decided on a title. The day I was there I got all the rumours whispered to me: *Small Faces*, *The Wee Man*, 10am, 1968, or maybe just *Easterhouse*, as originally planned.) The middle brother in the film, Alan, admires the Mackintosh-designed Glasgow Art School, and dreams, as does his pal Fabio, of going there to study. And young Lex is a secret sketcher; his room is full of skulls to draw, and pencils, and paperback art books to copy things from.

In the afternoon they were shooting the very last scene, Lex's bedroom; there's a lot of nat-

**Those gangs, with  
their crazy, comically  
ferocious names –  
The Glen, The Cumbie,  
The Priesty, The Fleet –  
had the run of the city**

ural light, and the room is full of boys' things of the period: a red and white tin of Cow Gum Rubber Solution on a bookcase; an old – even for the time – 45 of Jerry Lee Lewis's "Great Balls of Fire"; a bundle of sleeping bags for when pals stay over. Lex's schoolbag is covered in his mates' signatures, and mentions of Rangers FC. MacKinnon has a good way with the young actors. He's forever whispering suggestions to them: think of this, think of that. Lex will be drawing at his desk in the final shot, and his cousin Shiona is sitting on the bed. "This is the last look of the film, Iain," MacKinnon says to the actor playing Lex. "You'd better make it a good one." The actor smirks: "She gets the last word, I get the last look. What about a close-up?" MacKinnon smirks back: "Absolyootly."

Stephen Frears says that every time he meets Gillies MacKinnon he has a very good feeling about him. He taught him at the National Film School, and they share a sensible, unpretentious attitude to films and storytelling.

"What's nice about him," Frears says, "is that he's willing to get his hands dirty. He's kind of wide-eyed at the world, and trusting. The last few times I saw him I've thought, yes, you really are the good one. He's tenacious and modest and he talks a lot of sense." On the set of the new film, you could see that people generally respond to him in that way. His sense of how drama accumulates, how loss weighs in, keeps the whole thing steady. *Easterhouse* (or whatever) looks like it won't be rocking overmuch with sound and fury, with hectic, pop-promo stuff featuring urban decay and flashing blades. It will tell a very particular story of brothers trying to get on with their own lives, and not

always finding it easy – sometimes finding it perplexing and horrific.

After the last shot was done, MacKinnon came through to the other room. He turned up an old divan, and we sat on it to speak. I asked him about the street the MacKinnons grew up in. "Oh, tenements," he says, "and trams outside, and a Church of Scotland. There was an L-shaped close on one side – that was one gang – and an L-shaped one on the other, that was another gang. We'd wrestle and punch, quite innocent, but at a certain point in the early 60s it became serious around us, you know? I wanted to go to Art School. There was this malevolent energy around at that time. I suppose that's what this is all about – that sense of menace. A lot of the boys who were into it are probably driving taxis now, living ordinary lives." I wondered if the film had always been on their minds. "Well, the thing that really stuck out for us about those years in Glasgow, if you were a young person, was the gangs. No one had done this movie; we thought let's do it."

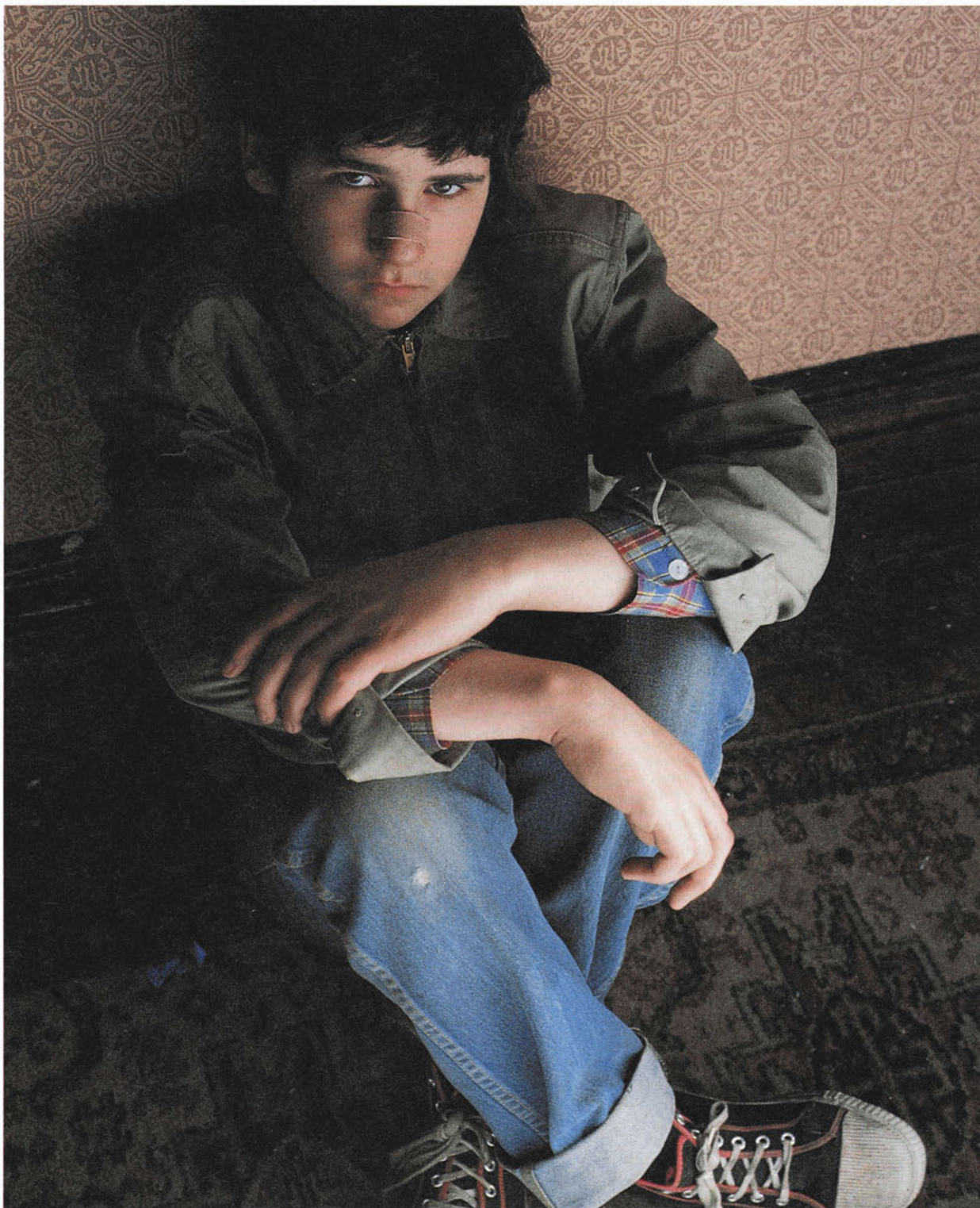
Though it's not often done the MacKinnon way, there has been a sort of convention in Glasgow culture – at times thoughtful, at other times ridiculous – of gangsterism, and what you might call brutal realism. Glasgow and gang terror, it's fair to say, were once synonymous. Gillies MacKinnon wonders what would have happened to him, and others like him, if he hadn't found something to do in Glasgow that wasn't to do with violence. "Perhaps I became a youth worker," he says, "because it gave me the chance to talk to the kids, whilst I was actually talking to myself." Glasgow violence, or the memory of it, has followed him in one form or another up to the present time. The film may be less of a return to something than its continuation by other means.

In spite of the gangland convention – perhaps because of it – there hasn't been a great deal of ripe drama on the subject of Glasgow violence (or fiction, or memoir) though there has been a bit. Much of the stuff has taken its cue from that 1935 florid terror-fest *No Mean City* – a novel of Glaswegian fighting written by McArthur and Long (not brothers, and one of them English). Its thrilling account of Johnnie Stark the Razor King had book readers jangling for an age, and it also labelled the city for good. The standard – lolling melodrama, dark slums, strong drink, colloquial slags, the use of violence to empower or to vindicate yourself, to get back at your father, to pull yourself up by your bootstraps – is one that has stuck around. Glasgow gangland culture hit its top note in penny-hopefuls like John McNeillie's *Glasgow Keelie* (1940); Bill McGhee's *Cut and run* (1962); and William McIlvanney's *Laidlaw* (1977).

MacKinnon will admit to being a Scottish director, but he sees the funny side of that (in the spirit of James Boswell's woeful response to Dr Johnson's slagging: "Yes I'm Scottish, but I can't help it!"). But he's not a parochialist, and he wants his film to travel. "Who knows if it will work," he says, "but I do believe the dilemmas and situations in this film will be universally recognised. I hope so."

Scottish television drama picked up the gangland baton from the paperback writers in





Boys and the gang: Iain Robertson as Lex in *Gillies* MacKinnon's new film, in which three brothers are touched by gangland violence

the 70s, and tried (as MacKinnon is doing) to avoid traditional sentiment and head for serious drama. This happened mainly in the work of Peter McDougall, who did it properly, even deftly, with realistic characters and tensions. Plays like *Just Another Saturday* (1975) and *Just a Boy's Game* (1979) still look good. They are unsentimental, and they reconfigure the gangland genre. McDougall's hardmen were real enough, in the sense that they were usually just silly wee boys doing their thing.

The interest in silly wee boys who want to be or used to be big shots is on the up. There's a part of Glasgow that's always lived a little in the Roaring 20s; there are little Cagneys here and there, talking out one side of their mouths, smoking out the other, and casual packs of

dead-end kids on every housing scheme. A taste for competitive male strife – for the tribulations of the boys – is back, and not only in Tarantino and Scorsese. Glasgow's awake to it too.

After a long let-up on this sort of thing – sponsored, you can't help feeling, by the 1990 Glasgow City of Culture bash, a festival of purification and self-denial if ever there was one – there are signs that people are looking again at the city's uncomfortable myths, and its notorious fighting with itself. David Hayman is working on a new film; ex-Barlinnie prison hardman and current *Granta* author Hugh Collins is publishing his memoirs; Peter McDougall has picked up his pen once more.

And then of course there's the MacKinnon brothers with their Easterhouse film, which

relights the past with a taper from the present. Making it has been a struggle, mainly against time: they've had to shoot it in 30 days. For Gillies, it's been a spell back doing what he is used to. After *The Playboys* (1992) he spent a while getting to know – and getting known in – Hollywood, and recently completed a film with Steve Martin (*A Simple Twist of Fate*). He says he got on very well with Martin, who wrote the script. What about Billy, I ask. What's it been like having a brother for a screenwriter? "It's a very important relationship," he says, tapping ash into a plastic cup, "and a very uneasy feeling if it isn't right." I take him to mean the relationship between director and writer in general, rather than brother and brother. Then I think more about it.



# DELIRIOUS INVENTIONS

**With the release of such films as 'Batman Forever', Mike Atkinson asks what promise the anarchic worlds of cartoon and comic strip hold out to live-action cinema, and what kind of movie aesthetic the marriage has bred?**

● As children, when we first saw a lusty Tex Avery wolf's eyes explode out of his skull to the blare of a car horn, it was as if a window had suddenly been thrown open on a world we'd sensed was there but could never see. Like drugs, only better, because we can still trust our senses, though human heads take the shapes of frying pans and Bugs Bunny need only reach beyond the edge of the frame to find an anvil, a sledge, a banana cream pie. If comics and cartoons have a ruling principle, our most chaotic impulses have the mandate. From George Herriman's *Krazy Kat* in 1916 to John Kricfalusi's *The Ren & Stimpy Show* today, the landscapes are fashioned of raw will, unfettered by morality or physics. It may be tiresome to debate whether EC Comics, Wolverine or Beavis and Butthead really warp juvenile minds, but we can't deny that the relationship of both cartoons and comics to actuality has always been antagonistic. In comics, stylised forms and eye-stretching compositions have been devised to express motion where there isn't any; frame by frame, some strips become restless metamovies that endlessly strive to burst free into a third dimension. Likewise, cartoons have always battled, often deliriously, to bridge the imaginative gap between what we feel and what ordinary live-action movies can show us. Both are blindly determined, it seems, to hang in mid air over a yawning chasm of visual possibility.

## Trash culture

Perhaps this is why comics and cartoons have always been highly prized as a source from which to recycle trash culture, though never quite so much as now: with such major studio releases as *Dennis* (based on the American *Dennis the Menace*), *The Flintstones*, *The Mask*, *The Crow*, *The Shadow*, *Timecop*, *Richie Rich*, *Tank Girl*, the ongoing *Addams Family* and *Batman* sagas and now that F/X juggernaut *Casper*, live-action transcription of 2-D phenomena has become a Hollywood passion. Upcoming is *Judge Dredd*; in production or pre-production are films of *Catwoman*, *Black Panther*, James Cameron's *Spider-*

*man* (in which Arnold Schwarzenegger almost played a villain: the Rhino), *Dr. Octopus*, *Prince Valiant*, *Speed Racer*, *George of the Jungle*, *Sgt. Rock* (Arnold again), *Daredevil*, *X-Men*, *Blade* and *Watchmen*. *Johnny Quest*, *Magilla Gorilla*, *Betty Boop* and *Green Lantern* cannot be far behind.

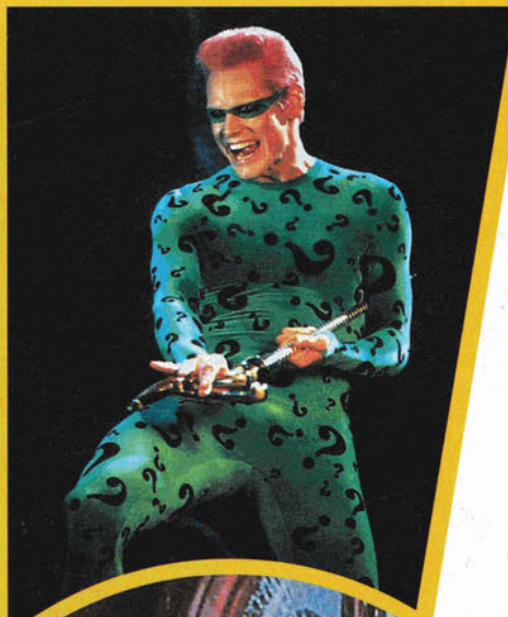
Simultaneously familiar and unexamined, this odd meeting of media goes back to the early days of cinema, with the likes of *Little Nemo* (1911) and *Ella Cinders* (1926) thereafter. The concept-hungry movie industry has been purloining the flotsam of daily comic strips, periodic comic books or intentionally ephemeral cartoon shorts ever since. Live-action comics were always considered adaptable fodder (*Joe Palooka*, *Gasoline Alley*, *Blondie*, *Barney Google*, *Ace Drummond*, *Little Iodine*) as were serials (*Dick Tracy*, *Red Ryder*, *Flash Gordon*, *Chandu*, *The Phantom*, *Terry and the Pirates*, *Superman*, *Captain Marvel*).

For the most part these were too constricted by budget and time even to attempt recreating the dense, propulsive *mise en scène* of the originals. Today, however, the impulse to resurrect and reinvent fond childhood hours wasted reading *Silver Surfer* or watching *Bullwinkle* can run to the looney tune of \$30-50 million; whereas in the 40s Hollywood could previously afford to make 28 *Blondie* films (sometimes four in one year), today one *Flintstones*, with its tsunami of merchandising tie-ins, could make or break a studio all by itself.

Moreover, hyperbolic comic and cartoon imagery is today an established movie aesthetic – a berserk but ironic Pop Art expressionism. Back in the days of *Blackhawk* and *Congo Bill*, all a film-maker required was a nylon costume and a few undressed backlots. Today the manner in which 3-D cartoon movies appropriate the intensity of a comic's or a cartoon's visuals is all-important. When using actors and real settings, the armour-plated, turbo-charged panels of a Jack Kirby or Steve Ditko comic and the protean physical madness of a Tex Avery cartoon can only be approximated: and what results is perilously entangled in formal incongruities. Movies exist in that dimensional state that ►

**Giddy transformations:** clockwise, from top left, 'Ella Cinders', an early hybrid; the upcoming 'Batman Forever'; the unsurpassed Betty Boop; the homage to cartoons, 'Who Framed Roger Rabbit'; the early comic-strip 'Krazy Kat', a world unfettered by morality; the comic 'Silver Surfer', as yet unfilmed; the 'trash'-derived 'Blondie Hits the Jackpot'; the special effects of the new 'Casper', centre top; Warren Beatty in 'Dick Tracy', centre bottom







◀ comics and cartoons have always – by their very nature – tried to invade: yet via extravagant lighting, clownshow-bright colour schemes, aggressively unreal decors, obvious models and make-up designs meant to look drawn, recent films have been struggling to break back across this same border.

The irony here is obvious; but the universe that live-action cartoon movies engender is rarely considered, nor how its laws might be rooted in the incongruity of rooting a style in hand-drawn art. It's this schizophrenic frisson that makes films from *Popeye* to *The Mask* and the current *Casper* fascinating in ways normal movies, or comics, can never be.

2-D culture is a world of both desolate and chaotic landscapes, where art styles (Arcimboldo, Rousseau, De Chirico, futurism, cubism, surrealism, Pop Art, Op Art, and so on and on) are simultaneously amplified out of control and folded back into the mix, only to be rediscovered and reconstituted as art (witness Roy Lichtenstein's comic panel versions of classical paintings, complete with giant-size Ben Day dots). On one hand this cartoon stylistics is graphic compensation for a lost dimension; on the other, flatness is the form's trump card. The

phantasia of two-way wrist radios, Batmobiles and Acme Atomic Bombs.

Though most pre-80s live-action cartoon movies ignored style altogether, there were some pioneering efforts, however campily dated they may now seem. The 1966 *Batman*, and its accompanying TV series, punched up its genre satire with lurid lighting, camera tilts and on-screen exclamations ("KA-POW!"). Roger Vadim's version of Jean-Claude Forest's sketchy *Barbarella* played like a Haight-Ashbury Halloween party, complete with play-acting, glitter drag and let's-put-on-a-show set-clutter. But it wasn't until Robert Altman's *Popeye* (1980) that there was genuine traffic between comics and flesh-and-bone. Its immediate predecessors, from the expensive *Superman* to the many cheap made-for-TV offerings (*Captain America*, *The Incredible Hulk*, *Wonder Woman* and *Spiderman*) had been merely prosaic. By comparison, so thoroughly incongruous is *Popeye*'s universe – as if caught in mid-metamorphosis between solidity and eccentric caricature – that anyone unfamiliar with the original cartoons would surely find it utterly incomprehensible, its founding texts turned to mysterious glyphs. Bringing a Max Fleischer scenario to life is unquestionably

one of lack, rather than one of greed.

Unsurprisingly, given these intractable difficulties, most attempts to confront the vision of a film's graphic source material have been half-hearted. *Conan the Barbarian* and *Brenda Starr* achieve a degree of synthesis via fortuitous casting. Like *The Incredible Hulk*'s Lou Ferrigno, Arnold Schwarzenegger (*Conan*) and Brooke Shields (*Brenda*) are both just as two-dimensional and physically grandiloquent as comic characters come to life – the Kirby-like Schwarzenegger is actually rather more cartoonish than artist Barry Smith's gritty *Conan*. *Howard the Duck* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, both based on semi-subversive underground comics, featured too-obvious animatronic creatures in otherwise mundane milieus – in comics, everything is real and of a piece. *Sheena*, *The Rocketeer*, *Swamp Thing*, *The Punisher* and *The Fantastic Four* have only their ad art to recommend them; Stephen King's and George Romero's *Creepshow* so aped the formal outittings of a comic that one wonders if it ought still to be called a movie at all.

Tim Burton's *Batman* and *Batman Returns* effectively established the 2-D-into-3-D paradigm for some time to come, and without dissolving the artifice in winking irony – even if Jack Nicholson's conspicuously Jack-like Joker does sometimes crash out of the movie's macrocosm into our laps. Burton's films erect a fully integrated urban nightmare that Dr Mabuse himself would be perfectly at home in: a world where it is always night and heroes and criminals alike are so tortured by bitterness and hate they've edged into nocturnal sociopathy and fetishism. Long stretches of both *Batman* movies takes place on the roofs and in the sewers of Gotham City; even the ghoulishly mutant pathology of the Penguin is believable given his history and habitat. This Penguin, played sleazoid by Danny DeVito, is hardly the monocled, top-hatted gadfly the 2-D Batman originally battled, while Catwoman and Batman are both dark angels with far messier psyches than their drawn counterparts. Less effort is spent in trying to replicate the original iconography than in reconceiving it all within a context that's at once fantastic, crowded with childhood fears and scrupulously adult-directed.

Among their other triumphs, and despite their narrative cloddishness, the films proved, with the chill and dark bughouse qualm of their cityscapes, that it was formally and economically viable for a big-budget Hollywood movie to indulge in visual stylisation and create its own hermetic Caligarian cosmos. *Batman Forever*, though less inspired visually, and greatly dependent on the elastic presence of Jim Carrey (a man whose genre has truly arrived), proves that the strategy will outlive Burton's interest in it as long as scene-stealing villains are available. (*The Crow*, a close cousin takes this Fritz Lang menace one step further, towards monochromatic, drizzly doom, approximating the arc-ing perspectives of comic visuals by ceaselessly scanning the alleys and pinnacles of its city miniatures as no film has done since the 1930 mystery *The Bat Whispers*.)

Perhaps it's just that a measure of respect for the 2-D mediums is required (admittedly it's

## Somewhere in Altman's 'Popeye' you can see the melancholy rituals of pop culture run like clockwork, and hear their songs of desire for a world better, and simpler, than the one we've got – where Olive Oyl is the prettiest girl in town, and one where spinach will make us strong

illusion of depth can be manipulated or discarded altogether; the suspension of movement can become a compositional *modus operandi*; raw shape and texture can take on a primal significance. Settings can vanish in the whirl of the moment, or warp to accord with the protagonist's worldview, all without camera tricks or in any way jarring us from our narrative trance. After all, drawn two-dimensionality implies an artist's whims just as cinema implies the intractability of photographed "reality".

This is the ripple in the continuum that distinguishes the 3-D foray into the 2-D lowlands. The rainbow colours, acute angles and Basil Wolverton freakishness of Warren Beatty's *Dick Tracy* bear no logical relation to the film's narrative or worldview, which is essentially kiddie noir. Rather, these changeling visuals are meant only to invoke, outside the context of the film's self-knowledge, the simple, pop-cult beauty of the original Chester Gould strip, and of 2-D-ness in general. Taken literally, the vivid, dreamlike designs and mutant villains (especially William Forsythe's Flattop) are free-floating concepts, disconnected from either the realism or the bare-bones resourcefulness of a tabloid comic. Where the stylisations of *noir*, say, or musicals, create an unreal universe reflective of its characters' inner life, the characters in a live-action cartoon are oblivious, and the inner life reflected really belongs to us, collectively, as we trip out on the maximised junk

daring; not significantly retooling it to make sense in three dimensions and with living actors is, in its denial of aesthetic integrity, almost Dada. Robin Williams is Popeye, with one eye inexplicably squinted shut and with huge, foam-rubber forearms that look tumorous; the landscape around him is equal parts Boys' Own bric-a-brac and jolly-roger jungle gym. This idiosyncratic aura worked fine in the comic strip and cartoons; it hardly does so here, because its *raison d'être* is outside the film's experience. But this disjunctive ontology is the film's most beguiling feature. Somewhere in the co-opted chaos you can see the melancholy rituals of pop culture run like clockwork, and hear their songs of desire for a world better, and simpler, than the one we've got – one where Olive Oyl is the prettiest girl in town, and one where spinach will make us strong.

### Cartoonish casting

*Popeye*, transmuted, is both surreal and poignant. Though similarly esoteric, the 3-D world of *The Flintstones* – with its relatively je-neune source – is counterfeit, simply aping the original's most popular tropes ("Cha-a-a-arge it!"). Too nakedly engineered for maximum culture-sponging, *The Flintstones* displays nothing but a deep ignorance of cartoons, live-action movies and any ontological distance between them. In truth, what ultimately differentiates *The Flintstones* and *Popeye* is that *Popeye*'s failure is





easier to find it for Bob Kane's Batman, and more recently Frank Miller's, than for later Hanna-Barbera).

This makes sense: after a century of cinema, cartoon environments have become a way of life. After all, the dominant cultural persona of twentieth-century America is a cartoon rodent's, Mickey Mouse. Disneyland and Disneyworld are autonomous, hyperreal city-states that native citizens Mickey, Goofy, Donald *et al* roam freely while we can only visit. The Disney nation even has its own flag, a silhouetted Mickey on a white field. What could be more of a live-action cartoon? The baroque, shadowless, faerie grotesquerie of Disneyworld's architecture is as close to an ideological 2-D secret garden as we may ever have in the 3-D world. As one strolls through its *faux* byways, it may lack the mysteries of 3-D reality – and yet this apparent lack of depth can come to seem its most mysterious feature. Hitchcock would have loved to set a thriller within this deranged perimeter; that the city elders would have for-

bidden such a tourist-trapping project further indicates a certain nationalistic sense of sanctity, as much motivated by idolatry of the cartoon ideal as of money. There may be fewer crackpot goings-on than in the Toontown of *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, but because Mickey's city's real, it's all the stranger.

#### The depthless and the deep

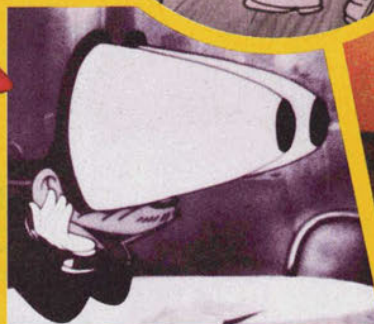
*Roger Rabbit* itself, though in fact based on a novel, owes more to the currents of cartoon life than any other film. Here the mixture of the depthless and the deep co-exist without cross pollination, a touchy situation reflected in the ghettoised nature of Toontown. The film's proposition – a parallel world in which cartoon characters are a real race relegated to particular social roles and their own walled-off quarter, otherwise mixing uncomfortably with a *noir*ishly stylised human society – becomes a hall of mirrors once we see Mickey, Bugs and Betty Boop among Toontown's denizens. The talent-duel between Donald and Daffy Duck ►

**Varieties of comic experience: clockwise from top left, Robert Altman's 'Popeye', with its thoroughly incongruous universe; the original cartoon 'Popeye'; 'Swamp Thing', a comic where everything is equally real; 'The Crow', a comic-gothic movie; Jane Fonda in the comic-strip-like 'Barbarella'**





COURTESY DISNEY/MIH STILLS POSTERS AND DESIGNS



◀ cordons off an imaginative territory for such figures more chaotically democratic than a state like Disneyworld. If they can't come to us (that is, become 3-D), we must go to Toontown, and meet them on their own terms.

Toontown is intended affectionately, but it's a concept that spills into possibly the most disquieting domain between the two realms – the potential tooning of the 3-D human body. Somewhere between the flat, exaggerated, endlessly malleable figure of a cartoon specimen and the breathing physique of an actor (even an Arnold) lies an undeniable anxiety the forearms of *Popeye* only barely suggested. The dynamic freedoms of 2-D systems represent a kind of wishful thinking; it would be a peril to our collective sanity if the fearless cruelty of a Daffy Duck cartoon entered our world, or ourselves. When Christopher Lloyd's black-robed ur-villain peels himself off the floor after being steamrollered, reinflates himself with helium and takes off his hand to reveal a looming, hand-drawn buzzsaw, it's a profoundly befuddling sight – though we're getting what we wanted, we realise at the same time that we were wrong to want it: please send him back to Toontown before it's too late! Throughout *Roger Rabbit*'s climactic scene Lloyd's blood-red eyes fibrillate and bulge in a lurid animated whorl: we have seen eyes like his a zillion times before in pure cartoons, and yet, especially for kids, the effect can be outright terrifying. The impulse to ghettoise is, under the circumstances, understandable. Call it Depth Supremacy if you will, but although Toontown as a notion means to poke sly fun at racial prejudice, we may find ourselves thinking this ghetto as necessary as a leper colony.

It's this that makes the *Roger Rabbit* finale the forerunner to *The Mask* and *Casper*; just as *Steamboat Willie* long ago pointed to *Pinocchio*. The bedlam suggested by Lloyd's seething cartoon bodyparts becomes wholesale in *The Mask*. Thanks to computer animation, Jim Carrey explodes like a big bad Avery wolf, but in three solid dimensions: his eyes fly out of their sockets like solid glass fastballs, while his horny

heart bursts out of his chest and nearly tears his shirt open. And *Casper*, which is based on the utterly guileless Harvey comic and TV series *Casper the Friendly Ghost*, boasts "more" visual effects than any movie ever made. Here nothing is safe from possible transmutation: in one (incidental) sequence Bill Pullman gazes into the bathroom mirror only to see himself morphed into Clint Eastwood, Rodney Dangerfield and Mel Gibson. The ghosts themselves are simultaneously 3-D and transparent, and capable of anything; computerised and bursting with cartoon hubris, they retain as much visual integrity as co-stars Cathy Moriarty or Eric Idle. One of the film's cleverest subtexts is the very characterisation of ghosts as cartoon-like beings – when Moriarty and Pullman pass beyond the veil their animated spirits are "drawn" caricatures of their fleshy selves. We even get to see the live boy Casper once was, and he's decidedly uncartoonish. This is a more subtle MacGuffin than *The Mask*'s mask, a simple metaphysical observation that nonetheless rationalises *Casper*'s entire universe. There are no incongruities here: given a rationale and a raw moment of state-of-the-art F/X, we have no reason not to believe our eyes.

#### Opening the gates

At last the dementia of 2-D art has genuinely entered the third dimension. Consider the perpetually snowballing capabilities of computer animation and you realise soon virtually anything will be possible, except perhaps the certainty of realism – or the present segregation of cartoon imagery from cinema as a whole. If someone decides that Bruce Willis should run out of the film's frame and past the sprocket holes, or that Meg Ryan should get sucked into a vacuum cleaner, nothing holds them back. Little reason remains why Silver Surfer or the Road Runner or Pogo cannot be perfectly realised as live movie phenomena. The gates of Toontown are now open. Finally, and forever, the creatures are free.

*'Batman Forever'* opens on 14 July, *'Judge Dredd'* on 21 July, *'Casper'* on 28 July

The eyes have it, in the world of cartoons with their denial of the laws of nature: Jim Carrey, donning the mask in *'The Mask'*, left; Mickey Mouse in *'Steamboat Willie'*, centre top; Tex Avery's *'Red Hot Riding Hood'*, centre bottom; Disney's wooden boy *'Pinocchio'*, right



From  
Merchant Ivory  
Productions

AWARD WINNING

CREATORS

OF

'A ROOM  
WITH A VIEW'  
'HOWARDS END'  
and  
'THE REMAINS  
OF THE DAY'

NICK  
NOLTE



GRETA  
SCACCHI



A MERCHANT IVORY PRODUCTION

# Jefferson in Paris

12

"EXTRAORDINARY  
A SPECTACULAR  
AND RARE FILM"

JANET MASLIN - THE NEW YORK TIMES

"TERRIFIC!  
A SERIOUS AND  
SUMPTUOUS FILM.  
NO LESS LITERATE  
OR PASSIONATE THAN  
'THE REMAINS OF  
THE DAY' OR  
'HOWARD'S END'"

SISKEL AND EBERT

"LAVISH  
A HANDSOME  
SPECTACLE"

DAVID ANSEN - NEWSWEEK

TOUCHSTONE PICTURES and MERCHANT IVORY PRODUCTIONS Present a JAMES IVORY film. NICK NOLTE GRETA SCACCHI 'JEFFERSON IN PARIS' JEAN-PIERRE AUMONT SIMON CALLOW SETH GILLIAM JAMES EARL JONES MICHAEL LONSDALE  
NANCY MERRILL THANDIE NEWTON GWYNETH PALTROW CHARLOTTE DE TURCKHEIM LAMBERT WILSON Original Score Composed by RICHARD ROBBINS Costume Design JENNY BEVAN JOHN BRIGHT Production Designer GUY CLAUDE FRANCOIS  
Editing ANDREW MARCUS ISABEL LORENTE Photography PIERRE L'HOMME Co-Producer HUMBERT RAMSAY Executive Producers DONALD ROSENFELD PAUL BRADLEY Written by RUTH PRAYER JHARVALA Produced by ISMAIL MERCHANT Directed by JAMES IVORY  
Distributed by BUENA VISTA INTERNATIONAL (UK) Ltd. & MAYFAIR ENTERTAINMENT UK LTD. ©BUENA VISTA PICTURES DISTRIBUTION, INC. Visit Buena Vista International's MOVIE PLEX on the INTERNET: <http://bvp.wdp.com/UK/>

EXCLUSIVE WEST END SEASON'S - ADVANCE BOX OFFICE'S NOW OPEN

JUNE 16

**ODEON**

LEICESTER SQUARE  
(0171) 930 3232

JULY 7

**CURZON**

MAYFAIR  
0171 369 1720

AND AT SELECTED CINEMAS ACROSS THE COUNTRY JUNE 23



## LEARN FILM MAKING

SIX WEEK SUMMER WORKSHOPS AVAILABLE AT  
**PRINCETON UNIVERSITY &  
NEW YORK FILM ACADEMY**

DIRECT YOUR OWN SHORT FILMS IN OUR  
HANDS-ON INTENSIVE WORKSHOPS  
USING 16MM ARRIFLEX CAMERAS.

LEARN CONCEPTS OF STORY, DIRECTING,  
CAMERA, LIGHTING, SOUND AND EDITING  
IN A TOTAL IMMERSION COURSE  
TAUGHT BY AWARD-WINNING INSTRUCTORS.

**NEW WORKSHOPS STARTING EVERY MONTH**

"CARPE DIEM"

TUITION \$4000

**NEW YORK FILM ACADEMY**

100 EAST 17TH STREET NYC 10003

TEL: 212-674-4300 FAX: 212-477-1414

FORMERLY LOCATED AT THE

TRIBECA FILM CENTER

VFS

## FILM PRODUCTION

We believe the world is changing faster than anyone can imagine. That things are getting harder, not easier. We believe opportunity does not come in the form of a lottery ticket but through commitment, focus, self discipline, and the ability to work hard. We believe time is precious. That it is not enough to commit to change, one must commit to always changing.

Vancouver Film School has developed commercial production curriculums that are equal or superior to the best programs in the world. The difference is our programs take less time... a lot less.

Full-time

Direct Education™ programs in:

Film Production ■ Classical Animation  
Portfolio Film Production ■ 3D Computer Animation  
Acting for Film & Television ■ Certified Alias Programs  
Multimedia Production ■ Certified Avid Programs

Call. Compare. Nothing does.



**VANCOUVER FILM SCHOOL**

1-800-661-4101

#400 - 1168 HAMILTON STREET, VANCOUVER, B.C. CANADA V6B 2S2



**Ron Shelton is the director of 'White Men Can't Jump' and the new baseball movie 'Cobb'; in interview with David Weddle he pays tribute to Buster Keaton's action movies and their heroes' struggles to survive in a cruel world**

● Ron Shelton decided to become a filmmaker in the summer of 1969. At the time a minor-league ballplayer, he was scratching out a living on dusty baseball diamonds in the Southwestern United States. "I went to movies every day," he explains, "basically to kill the afternoon 'cause you didn't have to be in the ballpark until 4.30 and the theatres were air conditioned. Well, in the summer of '69 I went to a movie called *The Wild Bunch* in Little Rock, Arkansas, across the street from the hotel. I was just going to kill another afternoon. It was just a Western, but I liked Westerns. After it was over I was exhilarated and I didn't know why. I was exhilarated, and I'd just seen a bunch of killers kill a bunch of other killers. I wanted to know why I was exhilarated." His curiosity and exhilaration would eventually lead him to Hollywood, and a career first as a screenwriter, then a director.

Is it so incongruous that a fan of Sam Peckinpah ("the Picasso of Violence") would cite Buster Keaton and Laurel and Hardy as his other major influences? Maybe not. Keaton's epic chase sequences and Laurel and Hardy's orgies of material destruction both pack the kinetic wallop of Peckinpah's shootouts.

And it is this visceral thrill that Shelton – a former professional athlete – responds to first in these movies: "The scene in *Sherlock Jr.* where the cop pulls Keaton over because he's running too fast, I loved that! And *Seven Chances* is one of my favourite movies of all time. The simple act of taking an ad out in the paper turns into this incredible, surreal sequence with hundreds of women in bridal gowns chasing Buster, and then it climaxes with the avalanche of boulders down a hillside. I have referred to that, many, many times in conversations. It's a truly fantastic sequence!"

Shelton's passion for sheer physical exertion, for the poetry of bodies in motion, is evident in the baseball games in *Bull Durham*, the striptease shows in *Blaze* and the basketball matches in *White Men Can't Jump*. But his attraction to these film-makers is more than physical. Like Buster, Stan and Ollie, Peckinpah's protagonists are drifters and misfits, wandering through love-

**Poetry in motion: Buster Keaton in 'The Navigator' (1924), above; and in 'The General' (1926), facing the world, right**



# SHEER

less landscapes, enduring the onslaughts of malevolent men and machines, with battered dignity and a throbbing ache to belong.

Perhaps this explains Shelton's decision to make a movie about Ty Cobb, the greatest player in the history of American baseball. Like Peckinpah's characters, Cobb was a consummate professional, a master of his craft, and like Keaton, breathtaking to watch in motion – able to push his body, it seemed, beyond the laws of physics. Yet both on the ballfield and off, Cobb was a certifiable monster: he was a sadist who aimed the spikes of his shoes at the heads of opponents as he slid to base, who beat his wives and children, and who once killed a man with his bare fists.

Shelton pokes at the beast's soft underbelly, exposing the vulnerability beneath the rage. (In the company of trusted friends, Cobb frequently broke down and wept uncontrollably.) As portrayed by Tommy Lee Jones, Cobb is a prisoner of his own demons, who longs for reconciliation with his children and acceptance from peers. His own self-destructive streak denies him both, so that he too remains an outsider, unable to comprehend or come to terms with the world around him.

*Cobb* is a quantum leap forward, one of those pivotal moments in a film-maker's career – like Keaton's second feature, *Our Hospitality* – where the artist can be seen maturing as we watch. All Shelton's previous films have been likeable if restrained slice-of-life comedy-dramas. Now for the first time he dares to plunge beneath the

skin of a character and explore the inner reality. In one sequence, Cobb attends an award ceremony at the Baseball Hall of Fame. As he watches a newsreel on his life and career, his inner demons mix with the images on the screen. The sequence brilliantly choreographs the guilt and paranoia that dance within the character; its hallucinatory power approaches that of Amy's visit to the church social in *Straw Dogs* and the tornado sequence in *Steamboat Bill Jr.*, in which visions from Keaton's subconscious are hurled at him in a raging psychostorm.

Shelton met with me over dinner in a West LA restaurant after he had spent the day watching three of Keaton's features, *Sherlock Jr.*, *The Navigator* and *The General*. The conversation was topical, for the world-wide Keaton cult continues to flourish. When The Silent Movie Theater in Hollywood shows a programme of Keaton films the house is packed with howling college students who crowd the sidewalks at intermission, trading tales they have gleaned from the many books on their hero: "You know that shot where he falls off the water tower in *Sherlock Jr.*? He broke his neck doing that!" A Buster Keaton fan club – The Damfinos – has been formed in New York; in October 1995 its members will gather in Muskegon, Michigan to celebrate the Great Stone Face's hundredth birthday. And Kino Video is releasing a three volume set of video tapes and laser discs, struck from restored prints of the 11 features and 19 shorts that Keaton made during the peak of his creativity between 1920 and 1927.



**David Weddle: Which movie did you like most?**

Ron Shelton: *Sherlock Jr.*

**Why?**

Well, I think that it sustains physical comedy about as well as any silent film of that length that I know of. I think that the others have great moments in them, separated by very long set-ups. But *Sherlock Jr.* just built and built and built, and it does things that haven't been topped, for sure.

**For instance?**

I think that the escape, where he's riding on the handlebars of the motorcycle, is one of the great extended sequences in film history.

**There are some amazing things in it. The scene where he rides over the bridge with the gap in it, and just as he reaches the gap it's filled by two trucks driving on the road beneath and he rides right over the top of them.**

And then the bridge collapses just as he reaches the end of it. Keaton takes a joke and keeps topping it well past the point when you think the

joke is worn out. He keeps coming up with fresh twists and turns on the joke.

**I think of the small things too, like his reaction shots. The moment when Buster turns to talk to the driver and discovers he's not there, that he's riding on the handlebars of the motorcycle all by himself, and he almost loses control of it.**

Which is a wonderful metaphor, because as soon as you learn too much you lose confidence! As long as you're operating, as we say, out of your head, you're home free. Once you start thinking and realise your dilemma, you're doomed! I just couldn't believe how long he extended that sequence. He just kept coming up with one gag after another after another. I love that, when a film or a story comes upon a great notion and keeps extending and extending and extending it. It gets me upset, watching movies, when there's a great idea for a scene and they don't exploit it, or realise it fully.

**One thing I've always admired about the pantomime**

**clowns of that era is their ability to work variations into a routine. Laurel and Hardy can do ten minutes just walking through a door.**

Well, Laurel and Hardy are my heroes. Laurel and Hardy and Buster Keaton are equal heroes. **You don't see that with modern comics. They will do one gag and it's over. They won't work all those variations.** I think that's the influence of television, and the need for immediate gratification and fast pace that it's created. These old classic comics, their movies were very fast paced, but they didn't mind taking their time setting up and delivering a joke, and then delivering it again and again and again. I think comics are too impatient now, like most things today.

**Speaking of that reaction shot in 'Sherlock Jr.' reminds me of another great one in 'The General'. There's a scene where Buster gets a boxcar caught on the front of his engine, and he's trying to figure out how to get rid of it when a steam leak breaks out in the engine cab. While he's busy trying to stop it, the boxcar hits a railroad**

# EXERTION





tie thrown onto the tracks by the Union soldiers he's pursuing, and derails. Keaton finally manages to stop the leak and when he turns to look out the front window the boxcar is gone. He missed the derailment, so to him it's as if it suddenly vanished. His only reaction is to slowly close his eyes, hold them shut for a beat, open them again and tilt his head quizzically. It's hilarious.

And he does a variation of that in every movie. When you turn around, the world's changed. He's always just missing it. There's that scene in *The Navigator* where he's struggling to set up the deckchair for the girl. He gets so caught up wrestling with the folding legs that he doesn't see her walk off in disgust. When he finally gets it set up and turns around, she's disappeared. If you blink, it's gone, everything's changed.

Yes, he has this running theme of not being able to comprehend the world around him. Like in the beginning of *'The General'*, when the army rejects him because he's too valuable to the Confederacy as an engineer. But they never tell him the reason, and he can't understand why he's not good enough. They accept the next guy in line, who is even smaller and skinnier than Buster, and he's measuring his height against the guy and feeling his biceps, and he can't figure out why he failed to measure up. There are many scenes like that in his movies.

I think that's a theme in American literature and movies. When I saw *Sherlock Jr.* I thought of Jake Gittes in *Chinatown*. Because Jake Gittes is a private investigator who always thinks he has it figured out, but he never does – which is a great characteristic that the Hammett and Chandler characters share. They are not superheroes, they're always getting it wrong, but just sort of right enough. They smell the problem, but get the solution wrong, time after time, which I think all of us identify with. We know there's something wrong in our job, our relationship, our marriage, our family or whatever, but we get the solution wrong! And so we're half right. That's what's wonderful and maddening. Keaton's amateur detective always thinks he's got it figured out, and he never does. Which is why I think it's a great movie.

Another sequence that I love in that movie, and that you can't imagine a comic today being able to do, is the one where Buster is reading the book on how to be a detective and it tells him to "shadow your man closely." So he follows the villain down the street, duplicating his every move, catching the cigarette when he tosses it over his shoulder and taking a puff himself.

Another superb extended comic sequence. He follows the man step for step. *Brilliant!*

And the way it ends, on the railroad platform, where the villain finally turns and sees him, and Buster casually waves and walks into an open boxcar and shuts the door, as if it is the most normal thing in the world to do!

Yes. He's afraid of being embarrassed or humiliated or caught, and so he winds up trapping himself inside the train. That's a great sequence. That film has some fabulously surreal moments too – the use of the projected image, and the way he projects himself onto the movie screen in his dreams. There's the scene in the dream within the movie within the movie, where he gets dressed up in a top hat and tails in his bedroom, then opens the wall safe and it turns out to be a door to the street outside, and he steps through it. A projectionist sees the world that way. Then he dives into the suitcase full of neckties, held by that strange old lady,



Hanging on: Buster Keaton in *'The Navigator'*, on the look-out, but likely only to find the unpredictable, above

and disappears inside it.

It's all about the magic of the cinema.

Yeah. It is cinema magic, and it's a pretty early use of it.

It was all done without optical printers, working with hand-cranked cameras.

There's a multiple reality going on. Place and time change in an instant in that movie.

Of course one of the greatest sequences in history occurs when he first steps into the movie screen and the scene keeps changing, jumping from one location to another, but he remains, caught within the movie frame. It's funny watching *The General* and *Sherlock Jr.* back to back. Both of them have great train sequences.

There are trains in almost every one of Keaton's movies. When he's running along the top of the train in *Sherlock Jr.* and grabs hold of the spout of the watertower and then gets drenched, I thought of the train robbery in *The Wild Bunch*. I just shot a big train sequence in *Cobb*, where as a boy Cobb stands on a trestle as a train approaches, then at the last minute jumps off into a river. Keaton had a real fascination with trains.

Yes. As a kid in vaudeville, he travelled constantly on trains with his family.

Some of the train stunts in *The General* are unbelievable. I don't know how he did them. These are gags done on a huge scale, and then he just casually throws them away, which I love. The movie keeps refusing to call attention to itself, which I also love. One of the big jobs I have as a director is giving actors permission to throw lines away, to not underline them, to just let them happen, let them flow. Don't think you have to get the biggest laugh, applause, or tears with a line. Just play the moment and let go of it and go on to the next moment.

Which brings us back to that reaction shot where he simply blinks his eyes.

Yeah. Keaton throws away train gags!

One of the most compelling things about Keaton is you feel this great outpouring of love for him, for his character, and yet he never demands it. There is great pathos in his character, and yet he never exploits that or forces it. You only catch it in little throwaway moments, like the one in *'The General'* where he rushes back to his town to warn them that the Union Army is coming. All of the Confederate soldiers rush off to meet the enemy and then the dust clears and there's Buster, left behind, standing all alone in the middle of the unpaved street, just for a moment. It's not milked.

It's a great scene.

And at the end of *'Sherlock Jr.'* when he wakes up and he's got his girl there by his side in the projection booth and he's watching the movie up on the screen to try and figure out how to express his love for her. There's this feeling of melancholy beneath the comedy, this underlying wish that the world could be as magical as a movie.

You know, it's interesting. I think why I've responded more strongly my whole life to Keaton and Laurel and Hardy than I have to Chaplin – which is not remotely a criticism of Chaplin, it's just a personal response – is because they are outsiders. They have no peers, and they keep trying hard to find their place in the universe, and failing. I identify with that. Now why do I identify with that? In a certain respect I am successful. But I've always felt like an outsider – as a kid, in high school, as a college student who marched against the Vietnam war and as an All-American athlete. The athletes thought I was too lefty, and the anti-war demonstrators and Civil Rights marchers couldn't believe I believed in competition and a free market economy. So I couldn't ever find my



peer group. And in Hollywood – am I a Hollywood director? Well, yes. No [pause] – I don't know. So I feel for those characters. I feel for Keaton. He's searching for his place.

Keaton always thinks he has things figured out, and he never really does. In the beginning of *Sherlock Jr.* his girlfriend's father's watch gets stolen and he tells everybody, "I'll handle this case!" He's going to solve the crime by following his *How To Be a Detective* book. Of course, the villain who stole it has already slipped the pawn ticket into Buster's pocket without him knowing. That's the fabulous blind optimism that they all have: Buster, and Stan and Ollie.

**I also love the quiet scenes in Keaton's movies, like the scene in 'Sherlock Jr.' in the parlour with the girl, where he gives her the ring and is afraid to touch her.**

And he marks up the price of the box of candy that he gives her, and later the villain uses that as evidence against him, to convince her father that Buster stole his watch. Almost everything Keaton does backfires, doesn't it? I think that's something that audiences connect to, "the best laid schemes of mice and men". Keaton captured that, and so did Laurel and Hardy. When Ollie says, "I have a plan," or when Rollo Treadway in *The Navigator* says, "I think I'll get married today," you know it's going to be a disaster. **I love the way Keaton defines character in simple visual terms. Such as by having the chauffeur drive him across the street so he can propose to the girl –**

– and to play the idle rich, which Keaton does in *The Navigator*, it's not a character that's easily endearing to an audience. The idle rich are not heroic to the general public, but Rollo Treadway is a member of the idle rich who is as lost in the world as one of the idle poor. Laurel and Hardy are also completely lost, but they at least have each other.

**Their films are comic nightmares, like Keaton's. Their vision of the world is really quite terrifying.**

Yes, there are many nightmare images in both of their movies. There's also that scene in *The Navigator* where Buster shuffles the wet deck of cards. It's so painful, you almost can't watch it. Who would even think of shuffling a deck of cards that's so wet that they're stuck together?

And of course a real Keatonesque moment in that movie – who else could ever think of such a thing? – is when he gets in the rowboat and attaches a rope to the front of the ocean liner and tries to tow it by rowing. That was a very nightmarish image: a man in a rowboat trying to pull a ship with a woman on it. I think most of us men identify with that image, because that's what it feels like we're trying to do. We're trying to pull an ocean liner with a rowboat and a tow rope, and the woman of our dreams is on it. We're trying to catch up with *something*.

You can reduce Keaton's films to these moments and images and situations that encapsulate, in a fabulistic way, human drama and behaviour. Sometimes how you get there is a little cockeyed, but when you get there it hits you in the stomach. You say, "I've been there."

Comedy, as has been pointed out a million times, is based on pain. We laugh or cry at pain. Those are the two masks – tragedy and comedy. That's why real comedy has to be about a painful experience, physical or, more appropriately, emotional. The banana peel is a great

movie conceit. It doesn't work in literature, and it doesn't work in real life. If you see a banana peel and somebody's walking along and you think they're going to step on it, you are seized with fear that they'll break their back, their tailbone, or get hurt, and you identify with that potential grief. In a movie, you see the banana peel, you anticipate it, the man steps on it and he goes flying and lands on his back, and you laugh. That laugh is our catharsis of pain.

Laurel and Hardy. All of their movies are about two guys trying to find dignity. They can't get it from anybody in the world, except each other. For all of their quarrelling, they give each other dignity. They move me to tears, because they continually pick themselves up and dust themselves off. All they want is a moment of dignity, and they cannot get it.

I remember one movie where Laurel and Hardy are at an auction and there's a grandfather clock they want. They get separated at the auction and they end up bidding against each other and raising the price up and up and up. It's unbearable to watch! They end up paying ten times its worth. Then they start to carry it out of the auction and across the street. In the middle of the street they set it down to get a better grip on it, and of course a car runs over it. **Their movies always start with a very simple premise. "Oh, my God, my wife's coming home at noon! I need you to help me clean up the house!" The more they try to clean up the house, the more it descends into chaos. By the end of the movie the house is a smoking ruin! It's the Myth of Sisyphus, in every movie. "Let's get this piano up to the top of those stairs."**

*The Music Box* is to me one of the greatest movies ever made. It is so unbearable to watch. And of course later they discover they didn't need to go up the stairs at all; there was a road that went right up to the house!

**They made a skyscraper thrill-comedy once, like Harold Lloyd's 'Safety Last'. It was called 'Liberty'. And the images of the two of them caught in this perilous situation, desperately clutching to each other in terror, are so moving. Because all they have to hold onto is each other. The world that they're trapped in in their films, if you take out Laurel and Hardy, is a murderous, ugly, horrible world – devoid of love or any redeeming qualities.**

It really is. Maybe that's what I was trying to get at in describing how I identify with them and Buster Keaton as being outsiders in need. Givers. They're capable of giving, of trying; they're honest. These are men who are basically persecuted for their honesty and endeavour. **There's definitely a sense of them being otherworldly. That's what I identify with. "I don't fit into this world and I don't understand it."**

"But I'm going to keep trying, because I believe there must be a way I can." It's that kind of blind and false hope that is quintessentially American. I admire Chaplin. He is a genius. But Keaton and Laurel and Hardy move me. They want dignity, they're always getting it wrong, they're not remotely malicious.

**And they need you. Part of it's tied up with their lives off-screen. Keaton lived in obscurity for 30 years after the big studios destroyed him.**

Stan Laurel did too.

**And Laurel and Hardy are still only reluctantly acknowledged by critics.**

Yeah. Why is that?

**I think they work on such a gut level, they don't apply any intellectual pretensions to their work at all.**

It's terrible the way this town treated Buster Keaton and Stan Laurel in their later years, not to mention D. W. Griffith. But it hasn't changed. How can it be that Billy Wilder doesn't have an office at a studio in Hollywood today? I don't care if his last movies were no good. Give him an office! For every \$65 million budget movie, much less \$135 million for *Waterworld*, give Billy Wilder \$15 million. So he makes a bad movie and loses money. Who cares? But this is not a sentimental business. It's not even an appreciative business. Stan Laurel lived in a tiny apartment in Santa Monica, forgotten. Buster Keaton had to go to Europe to be rediscovered. It's absurd.

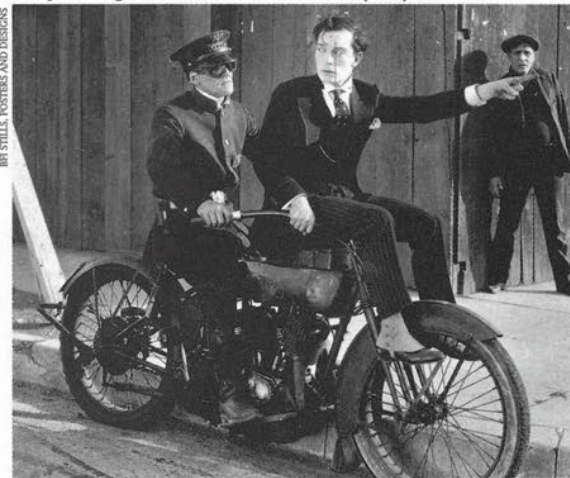
**Sam Peckinpah, another of your favourite film-makers, also died largely forgotten. He couldn't get an office at a studio either. Is there a connection between Keaton and Peckinpah for you? Do they share anything in common?**

They both made films about human behaviour, which, at least in intention, is at the heart and the root of every movie I make. There was a dark nightmarish quality to every comedy Keaton made. With Peckinpah, there is this perverse humour behind all the darkness. So in that sense they're connected. Peckinpah's *funny* in my mind. His movies have great dark humour. **We showed 'The Wild Bunch' here in Hollywood a couple of weeks ago. I hadn't seen it with an audience in years, and it was very surprising because I had forgotten how funny it is. The audience was laughing, roaring, in many of the scenes. You know, when 'The General' was first released, in 1926, most American critics panned it. One of the things they attacked was the black humour in it, like the battle scene where Buster waves his sword and the blade flies off, and then it cuts to a shot of a dead Union sniper with the sword blade in his back. The New York critics called that "tasteless" and "sick".**

How about funny? See, I think great moviemaking is always based on something real. It doesn't matter if it's pratfalls and banana peels. It can be operatic, it can be over the top, it can be underplayed, as long as it's based on human behaviour. Laurel and Hardy needing dignity more than anything else; Buster Keaton always getting it wrong, trying to do the right thing, and blindly moving forward – that's human behaviour, and that's what great movies are made out of.

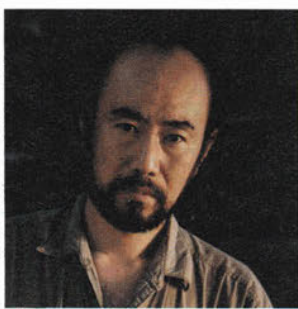
Ron Shelton's 'Cobb' opens on 7 July and is reviewed on page 42 of this issue

**Always moving: Buster Keaton in 'Sherlock Jr.' (1924)**





THE  
UPS  
AND  
DOWNS  
OF



# ZHOU XIAOWEN

**In Beijing the director discusses his troubled career and his new film 'Ermo'. By Tony Rayns**

● If Zhou Xiaowen is one of the most interesting 'Fifth Generation' directors in China, why has no one outside China ever heard of him? The short answer is that the Chinese government's Film Bureau hasn't let them. Two of Zhou's best films – the ones that would have won him an international reputation – spent years on the shelf, banned from release in China and refused export licenses. One of them (*In Their Prime*/Tamen Zheng Nianqing, 1986) is still banned at home and abroad; the other (*Black Mountain*/Heishan Lu, 1990) has cleared censorship with ten minor cuts and is now free to travel, but has had much of its thunder stolen by films like Zhang Yimou's *Ju Dou*.

Zhou has made other movies, none of them without interest, but none likely to convince critics or audiences that he is a major figure. Now, like every other director in China, he is stumbling through the wreckage of the state film industry, looking for new sources of finance. Happily he found backing from Mainland Chinese businessmen in Hong Kong to complete his latest film *Ermo*, which has won him his first international festival prizes and his first foreign distribution deals. But *Ermo* is his ninth feature, depending on what you count, and so there's a lot to Zhou that the rest of the world has yet to catch up with.

The best way to introduce Zhou Xiaowen is to let him introduce himself. When I sat down with him in Beijing last summer, nine years after our first meeting, this is how he described his entry into the film business. Before quoting him, I should mention that he was born in Beijing in 1954, which means that he was 12 when the Cultural Revolution turned China upside down and reduced urban society to chaos.

"I joined the Army at the age of 15, and served for three years. There were some other kids from Beijing in my squad and we formed a kind of gang; the peasant kids called us 'City Soldiers'. Virtually all past culture was banned at that time, and so we broke into a library one moonless night and stole some books. We grabbed whatever came to hand. I was the youngest in the gang, and so I got stuck with the two books that no one else wanted – which happened to be the two volumes of *Methods of Expression in the Art of Cinematography* by the great cameraman Wu Yinxian. I had nothing

else to read for the next two years.

"When I was demobilised I heard that the Beijing Film Academy was recruiting students to be newsreel cameramen [*China's national production was limited to newsreels and filmed stage performances at the time – TR*], and so I applied to sit the entrance exam. When I got in, I found that Wu Yinxian's book was the only course textbook, and so I didn't have much to learn in the classes. I did get to use two cameras, though: a China-made Red Flash and a French Debie. And I'd sneak into the library to read books on directing.

"On graduating, I was assigned to work as an assistant cameraman at the Xi'an Film Studio. Being 'educated', I was the lowest of the low. The studio was in the countryside in those days, and many farmworkers were being hired as labourers; I was below them. I wasn't even allowed to carry or load the camera. I tried to re-enter the Beijing Film Academy when it re-opened fully in 1978, this time to join the directing class, but my permission to sit the entrance exam was rescinded on the day of the exam because there was a Ministry of Education rule prohibiting people from taking second degrees. If they had let me in then, I would have been a classmate of Chen Kaige, Tian Zhuangzhuang and the others.

"I spent the next six years trying to get transferred from the Xi'an studio's camera department to the directing department – without success. Obviously they wouldn't let me direct just like that, so I asked to be trained to keep continuity. But none of the studio officials would hear of it. Then, in 1984, Wu Tianming was elected the new studio head [*He was already working as a film director on the studio staff – TR*]. I went to him with the same line about wanting to learn continuity skills, and he said: 'If you want to direct, say so!' He gave me a job as assistant director on Yan Xueshu's *In the Wild Mountains* (*Ye Shan*, 1985), and then let me co-direct *In Their Prime* the following year."

Wu Tianming made Xi'an Film Studio the most exciting production centre in China in 1986, using blatantly commercial martial arts movies and ghost stories to subsidise 'experimental' films by the leaders of the controversial 'Fifth Generation'. Wu himself was shooting *Old Well* (*Lao Jing*), with Zhang Yimou as star and co-cinematographer. Tian

Zhuangzhuang was shooting *Horse Thief* (*Daoma Zei*). Huang Jianxin, already famous for *The Black Cannon Incident* (*Heipao Shijian*, 1985), was shooting his sci-fi follow-up *Dislocation* (*Cuo Wei*). Chen Kaige came in from Guangxi to prepare *King of the Children* (*Haizi Wang*, 1987) and Zhang Yimou was about to begin work on his first feature as director, *Red Sorghum* (*Hong Gaoliang*, 1987). Zhou Xiaowen's *In Their Prime* (co-directed with a woman first-timer, Guo Fangfang) is certainly in the same league as most of those films.

It is set during China's 1979 border war with Vietnam, a 'small war' in which the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) was humiliated. Most of the film is set in a cave where a platoon of Chinese soldiers is holed up, waiting for ammunition, rations and water. Many are very young; some lose control, and most of the rest die under Vietnamese fire when they finally make a break across country. This material is cross-cut with a commanding officer's trip to Beijing to break the news of another officer's death to his pregnant wife. In one-child-China, the widow has to consider aborting her now fatherless child; she comes close to a breakdown while discussing this question with the officer in Beijing's Museum of Military History.

Not surprisingly, it was the PLA itself which demanded the film's suppression. The Film Bureau, then under the relatively liberal leadership of former scriptwriter Shi Fangyu, had passed the film for domestic release and had accepted an invitation to send it to compete in the Locarno Film Festival when the Army stepped in. Aside from a 'protest' screening of a video copy in London a couple of years ago, the film has never been shown anywhere. The peremptory ban had several bad effects. Beyond the obvious setback to Zhou's own ambitions, it denied the studio any chance to recoup the film's production cost (at a time when government subsidies to the studios had been withdrawn), thereby weakening Wu Tianming's already embattled position as studio head.

Zhou's subsequent career reflects the general climate in the Chinese film industry at every turn. Chen Kaige's *King of the Children* marked the end of pure 'Fifth Generation' film-making in 1987; after that, no studio (least of all Xi'an, given all the political and economic pressures on Wu Tianming)



Above the horizon: the Mongolian actress Alia as the eponymous heroine of Zhou Xiaowen's 'Ermo', the feature that persuaded him to carry on making films, below



dared to produce anything remotely 'experimental'. Zhou had no choice but to accept Wu's request for viewer-friendly genre movies. His next two films were consequently thrillers: *The Last Frenzy* (*Zuihou de Fengkuang*, 1987, also known as *Desperation*; co-directed with the writer Shi Chenfeng) and *The Price of Frenzy* (*Fengkuang de Daijia*, 1988, also known as *Obsession*). Both of these films are remarkable in their way and nothing like them had been seen in China before, but their immense success in the market provoked a glut of imitations. Suddenly almost every studio in China was rushing to produce 'Frenzy' ('Fengkuang') movies.

*The Last Frenzy* is a hunt-and-chase movie, pitting a macho vigilante cop (Liu Xiaoning) against a psychotic murderer (Zhang Jianming) and drawing the inevitable parallels between them. Its interest is partly that it masters the conventions of the genre with more pace and flair than many Hollywood movies, but also that it makes some eye-opening detours through the burgeoning subcultures of the late 80s, including the disco scene, the beauty parlour scene, the fashion for karaoke and the production of underground video porn.

*The Price of Frenzy* is heavier: it's about a young woman's increasingly out-of-control determination to nail the man who raped her teenage sister.

(She finally gets to him at the same time the cops do but manages to kill him anyway, ending up in custody herself.) Despite featuring both a car chase and dialogue discussing the harmful effects of pornography, this is not very successful as either genre film-making or social commentary. What brings it to life and makes it extraordinary, especially by the standards of Mainland Chinese cinema of the late 80s, is Zhou's frank interest in questions of gender and sexuality. He starts out mythologising the female bond between the two sisters (Wu Yujuan and Li Jing), stressing that they have been abandoned by their divorced parents, and then sets up an elaborate pattern of contrasts between the two leading men: the rapist (Chang Rong), a steroid-crazed muscle-queen, and the elder sister's boyfriend (Xie Yuan, the teacher from *King of the Children*), a bookish nerd. Setting the film in the German-built city of Qingdao, which couldn't look less Chinese, helps turn these characters into archetypes from a Grimm fairy tale.

Zhou now rationalises these idiosyncratic emphases by saying that he was reaching for something beyond an "ordinary" commercial film: "While making the two thrillers, I thought a lot about the categories of 'art film' and 'entertainment film' and came to the conclusion that it's a

false dichotomy. I looked for a middle way between the two. At the same time, I respected what I think is every director's obligation, which is to test the limits of censorship. That was the thinking that led me to make *Black Mountain*."

China's lurch back to authoritarian government and a climate of paranoia in the wake of the Tiananmen Square massacre hit Zhou as hard as any other artist in the country. Xi'an Film Studio (now under new management; Wu Tianming was abroad at the time of the massacre and chose not to return) closed down his project to make a men's prison movie called *Nine Summers* (*Jiu Xia*) just before the start of shooting. He turned instead to *Black Mountain*, which replays the sexual dynamics of *The Price of Frenzy* in overtly existential terms – and found himself embroiled in his second major clash with the Film Bureau.

*Black Mountain* is set in a northern forest in the late 1930s, the time of Japan's invasion of China. It centres on two men and a woman. The men are essentially the male protagonists of *The Price of Frenzy*, but abstracted from any social context: a muscle-bound meathead with a propensity for violence (Zhao Xiaorui) and his gentle fellow coolie (Xie Yuan again). The unnamed woman, however, is more interesting than either of the sisters in ▶



**Lost horizons: Zhou Xiaowen's 'In Their Prime' (co-directed with Guo Fangfang), the suppressed study of China's border war with Vietnam and a troop of Chinese soldiers holed up under fire, below**

◀ *Frenzy*: she has taken over an abandoned church and runs it as a makeshift inn for travelling traders, feeding them, treating their battered feet and just occasionally sleeping with them. Making her screen debut in a role virtually without dialogue, the Mongolian actress Alia (who went on to play Ermo for Zhou) succeeds in suggesting the woman's rich inner life. Predictably enough, the meathead wants her while she wants the other man; the sexual tensions remain unresolved at the climax, when the Japanese army turns up and she dies in the fray. Working for the first time as his own cinematographer, Zhou stages and shoots *Black Mountain* as a cross between backwoods film noir and silent opera.

The Film Bureau hated it. "It was disapproved. I asked what was the problem, but no one would say. They just told me to go home and 'think it over'. My reply was that I'd thought it over and concluded that there was no problem. But nothing I said made any difference. The Film Bureau insisted it wasn't banned, merely temporarily disapproved. Xi'an eventually received written notice that it would be passed if various cuts were made, and it has just been cleared for export too. The cuts were mostly moments of sex and violence, although there was never any full nudity to cut. The studio had to accept the cuts to get the film released..." From an outsider's perspective, it seems most likely that *Black Mountain* was tarred with the same brush that got Zhang Yimou's *Ju Dou* banned in China for nearly as long. Zhou's film doesn't have the allegorical implications of Zhang's, but the Film Bureau evidently sensed something dangerous or subversive in both films' single-minded focus on unrestrained passions.

As the state film industry fell apart in the early 90s, all Chinese directors except the privileged few with easy access to foreign finance were buffeted by uncertainties. Zhou, of course, was no exception. He made three low-budget features for Xi'an, mainly to help the studio fulfil its production quotas, and began directing a Hong Kong-financed thriller, only to have it taken out of his hands by its producer. The best of his Xi'an features – he again shot it himself – is *No Regrets* (*Qingchun Wu Hui*, 1991), which stars Zhang Fengyi as a discharged soldier turned demolition worker who falls in love with the nurse who treats his irrational murderous rages. Zhou says the story has autobiographical meaning for him:

"I never drove a demolition truck or tried to strangle my wife, although my ex-wife did once try to strangle me. My own experiences with women have all been rather complicated, always rather more serious than I thought they were while going through them. What interested me in this story was how easy it is to forget the initial rapture of falling in love. There's some connection between that and the motif of demolition."



Zhou saved his worst film for Xi'an till last. His overdue break with the studio came with *The Lie Detector* (*Ce Huang Qi*, 1993), an incomprehensible movie shot under duress in 20 days. "I was deeply frustrated by the banning of *In Their Prime* and *Black Mountain*, and had a lot of trouble in my personal life. I was even thinking of ending my film career, but friends in the studio persuaded me to press on, if only to give them work! And the Xi'an studio head was begging me to shoot something. He gave me a script – a terrible script, full of disgusting stuff. I agreed in principle to make something, and went away to write a script myself. It was about a painter who specialises in male nudes, his wife who runs a shop selling mannequins and a girl who works as a fashion model: a kind of triangle. We were about to start shooting it in Beijing when the studio found out that I was switching projects on them and tried to stop me. I gave them an ultimatum: either go with my script, or abandon the whole thing.

"As a result, the shoot was a nightmare and the finished film came out very rough. I was drinking brandy on the set, but forbidding anyone else to drink. The script was abandoned and we effectively made it without one. At some point I decided the whole thing should be about a conspiracy, and used the music from *Aida* to underline the point. (My elder sister studied opera when I was young, and I used to hear her singing *Aida*.) The entire experience was the only time in my career when I developed a hatred of film-making."

*Ermo* was the project that pulled Zhou back from the abyss. He found the original novel by Xu Baoqi at the end of 1992 ("I was reading voraciously at the time, and *Ermo* was the shortest novel on the pile. Xu was the least famous of all the writers I was reading, but I found the book funny and interest-

ing") and hawked it around all 16 feature-producing studios in China. When none of them wanted to touch it, he decided, in desperation, to produce it himself – effectively aligning himself with the young 'underground' film-makers in Beijing and Shanghai who have been making unauthorised films outside the system.

But he ran out of money just as he began the post-production and spent several agonising months trying to raise extra money in China and Taiwan. He was bailed out by Chen Kunming and Jimmy Tan, Beijing entrepreneurs with offices in Hong Kong and California, who saw the rough-cut and agreed to finance the completion in exchange for world rights. Both they and Zhou are delighted with the partnership, and they have agreed to finance Zhou's next project, an innovative drama set in the Qin Emperor's court over two thousand years ago. The working title is *Xue Zhu*, which means literally "Qin Blood".

Zhou Xiaowen is much more a representative of the Chinese film industry than elite figures like Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou. He is essentially a jobbing director who has come late to the possibility of using foreign money to finance projects refused by China's own studios. He is also very clearly a formal and thematic innovator, and a conscious thorn in the side of the Film Bureau. In short, an admirable figure who fully deserves the success that *Ermo* has brought him. However, he insists that it's wrong to think of him as a filmmaker: "Actually, I don't like making films. I don't like working with actors or designers. What I love, though, is the camera, the machine itself. I think it's just the most beautiful machine there is."

Grateful thanks to Shen Ning for help with translation. *'Ermo'* opens on 23 June at the ICA and is reviewed on page 47 of this issue.



CIBY 2000 PRESENTS

Sophie Marceau - Philippe Noiret - Claude Rich - Sami Frey

# D'Artagnan's Daughter<sup>15</sup>

A FILM BY  
Bertrand Tavernier

"A Sexy, Funny... Lighthearted Pleasure."  
VARIETY

"Fine Swashbuckling Entertainment."  
SCREEN INTERNATIONAL

Jean-Luc Bideau - Raoul Billerey - Charlotte Kady - Nils Tavernier - Luigi Proietti - Jean-Paul Roussillon

Screenplay MICHEL LEVANT Based on an original idea by RICCARDO FREDA and ERIC PONDIRON Adaptation and Dialogue MICHEL LEVANT and JEAN COSMOS Director of Photography PATRICK BLOSSIER Sound MICHEL DESROIS and GERARD LAMPE Art Director GEOFFROY LARICHER Costumes JACQUELINE MOREAU  
Editor ARIANE BOEGLIN Production Director VERONIQUE BOURBOULON Original Music PHILIPPE SARGE Executive Producer FREDERIC BOURBOULON A CIBY 2000/LITTLE BEAR/TFI FILMS CO-PRODUCTION WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF CANAL+ AND BNP IMAGES  
SOUNDTRACK AVAILABLE ON SONY As Artificial Eye/Mayfair Film Released by Artificial Eye

**STARTS FRIDAY JULY 7**

**Lumière**

ST MARTIN'S LANE WC2  
PHONE 0171 379 3014  
F 0171 836 0691

**CHELSEA CINEMA**  
206 KING'S ROAD 0171 351 3742

**RENOIR**

BRUNSWICK SQ WC1  
RUSSELL SQUARE TUBE  
PHONE 0171 837 8402

## Call for Entries Films

★ (married prints: 16 OR 35MM) ★

FEATURE LENGTH & SHORT FILMS • NO OLDER THAN 1994

FICTION, DOCUMENTARY, LIVE ACTION & ANIMATION

\$1,000 AWARD FOR BEST SHORT FILM

Non-English LANGUAGE FILMS MUST HAVE ENGLISH SUBTITLES

Preview Videos REQUIRED

All formats OK

★ Entry Forms: ★

WRITE TO US AT ADDRESS BELOW OR CONTACT US AT:

Fax: 01 619 534-7665 • Phone: 01 619 534-0497

Website: <http://sdcc3.ucsd.edu/~serwin/film.html>

San Diego  
Film Festival  
1996

UC SAN DIEGO • DEPT. 0078  
9500 GILMAN DRIVE  
LA JOLLA, CA • 92093 • USA

edited by  
Jonathan Romney  
&  
Adrian Wootton

**celluloid jukebox**

popular music and the movies  
since the 50s

"...an essential  
purchase."  
**The Wire**

"...a good and  
intelligent read."  
**Vox**

Wide-ranging and provocative,  
featuring interviews with  
Quentin Tarantino, David Byrne  
and Ry Cooder, and all for  
the price of a CD.

ONLY £12.99 from all good  
bookshops everywhere!

See CELLULOID JUKEBOX -  
THE FILM SEASON at the  
National Film Theatre;  
May to July

BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE

BFI PUBLISHING



# DUELS WITH A CAMERA

**Swordplay is one of the great rituals of cinema, from the Hollywood swashbuckler to 'The Empire Strikes Back' and now 'D'Artagnan's Daughter'.**

**But how have directors coped with filming such action? And how can the camera orchestrate the movement? By Philip Strick**



BFI STILL, POSTERS AND DESIGNS



● Flying the colours of a true cinéaste, Bertrand Tavernier first intended his production of *D'Artagnan's Daughter* to be directed by one of the story's originators, Riccardo Freda. An appealing notion: back in 1949, inspired by two Gene Kelly swashbucklers *The Pirate* (1948) and *The Three Musketeers* (1948), Freda's *Il figlio di D'Artagnan* was an antidote both to the neorealists and to the *noirs*. But if Tavernier had in mind a return to the rough-hewn peculiarities of post-war Italian pageantry, he seems to have relented. When Freda, now in his mid-eighties, had to decline the project, Tavernier looked for inspiration from a wide variety of other sources, from classics like *Scaramouche* (1952) and *Captain Blood* (1935) to the films of Richard Lester and Sam Peckinpah.

In the end, he claims to have imitated none of them. But echoes of Freda, ironically, are to be found in Tavernier's gaunt images of de Crasac's castles, which rise from the mists like the monuments for torture and despair in Freda's later thrillers. Peckinpah is shamelessly recreated in slow-motion glimpses of leaping horses, and a stuntman riding through a window. From Lester comes an emphasis on the individual style of each Musketeer along with the whole tone of casual mockery, while the magnificent opening sequence of the manhunt in the woods – together with many other images of thundering horsemen – unarguably owes a debt to Kurosawa.

The four major fight scenes in *D'Artagnan's Daughter* are what stirs the excitement and the recognition: they evoke the rituals of all sword-play drama, rituals which Tavernier has set out both to revive and to renovate. And they raise the fascinating question not of how the players are trained to exchange blows (which is what fight directors are for) nor whether they have mastered their proper *quartes*, *quintes* and *ripostes* (most audiences are in any case unlikely to know the difference) but of how the result can be filmed with any originality, and what, if anything, the camera can add to the spirit and meaning of the encounter.

The basic filming of any hand-to-hand confrontation requires, one would imagine, three main camera positions: one close-up for each participant (preferably viewed over the opponent's shoulder) and a long-shot of them both. Cutting between the three viewpoints then provides a safe and unremarkable routine, so formulaic that most directors rightly do their utmost to vary it, or avoid it altogether. It's in the avoidance that the fun begins.

Illustration could be found from any number of favourites, but let's start with *The Sea Hawk* (1940), directed by Michael Curtiz. The dashing Captain Thorpe (Errol Flynn), Queen Elizabeth's champion, finally unmasks the treacherous Lord Wolfingham (Henry Daniell) who aspires to the English throne with Spanish connivance. Their duel was performed by stuntmen Don Turner (doubling for Flynn) and Ralph Faulkner (Daniell), both occasionally identifiable in the heat of the action. The contest is launched by a formal exchange of long-shots and close-ups, and soon involves an overturned table and some extravagant swipes at the candles on the wall (a wild gesture des-

**All the fun of the fight: Errol Flynn (as Captain Thorpe) in combat with the treacherous Henry Daniell (as Lord Wolfingham), in Michael Curtiz' classic 'The Sea Hawk'**

tined for parody, years later, by Danny Kaye). Avoiding disaster against a pillar, Thorpe rolls down some steps and, recovering, drives his adversary back across the huge polished floor of the throne room. From a distant vantage point, the camera studies their vast shadows on the opposite wall.

Closely synchronised with Erich Korngold's music, the fight lasts 90 seconds and ends abruptly, after a close-up of Wolfingham looking confident. The sequence is remarkable for its speed, its acute sense of location, and its use of all the standard elements – the furniture, the window, the lost footings, the deadlocks, the near-miss beside the pillar, the perilous flight of stairs – but in particular for the astonishing shadow-play which, through space and scale, creates an emblematic grandeur. The shadows draw attention to the elegance of the swordsmen as they dance immaculately across the room, but they also transcend them with a heroic choreography of their own, a declaration – befitting the era – of national issues at stake.

In another memorable throne room, the contest is more a family affair. Olivier's *Hamlet* (1948), still one of the finest examples of how to film a duel in a confined space without being trapped by the 'three shot' system, at the same time remains a clear, blow-by-blow reading of both text and action. According to Cornel Wilde, Olivier on the Broadway stage in 1940 could be an unpredictable opponent, leaving Wilde (as Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet*) copiously scarred; nevertheless his swordplay in *Hamlet* (guided by Dennis Lorraine and filmed by Desmond Dickinson) has an icy precision. After the establishing long-shot, there is a curl of the camera from a close-up of Laertes (Terence Morgan) to focus on his poisoned blade as it crosses Hamlet's foil. Every image is laden with similar allusions to an interior and as yet unrecognised conflict, so that the clash of weapons becomes little more than an accompaniment: indeed, at the second bout the camera glides between and past the duellists to centre on the Queen (Eileen Herlie), her eyes on the fatal goblet beside her, as if the sound of the fight were her own wounded thoughts briefly audible.

While the agility of the adversaries is a necessary attraction in film fighting, too often the only one, Olivier's trick in *Hamlet* is to put the exchange of blows in second place to the exchange of glances. Elsinore's allegiances and betrayals are turned by the camera into a perpetual subtext, as when the dying Queen (in the foreground) falls 'across' the dying Laertes (in the background) or when the King (Basil Sydney), stabbed in his turn, is encircled by the spears of his former guards. In the decade of historical melodramas that followed, with its countless variations on the themes of Dumas, Scott, Stevenson and Anthony Hope, such surgical accuracy of positioning and characterisation as Olivier's became a rarity, although at times the fights were – as with the famous six-and-a-half minutes in *Scaramouche* – considerably more intricate. Under the guidance of (among others) Gene Heremans, fencing coach at the Los Angeles Athletic Club, Olympic champion Ralph Faulkner (around whose fight-pattern was constructed much of the Ronald ►





◀ Colman *Prisoner of Zenda* in 1937) and the ubiquitous father-and-son team Fred and Albert Cavens, their grasp stretching from *The Black Pirate* (1926) to *The Scarlet Buccaneer* (aka *Swash-buckler*, 1976), screen swordplay has had a discipline of its own, one that is still keenly appreciated (as the recent NFT season illustrated) by the fencing fraternity.

While hardly aspiring to the Olivier standard, Tavernier has taken his pick from the parade of knights, musketeers, outlaws, pirates and avengers of the 1950s, and as well as the usual clinches, stairways, pillar-bashing and maltreatment of furniture, takes a particular delight in the 'wicked lady' concept. Conceived as a startling challenge to the usual plot-line, this device is habitually turned to by film-makers and becomes perkily reincarnated by Sophie Marceau in *D'Artagnan's Daughter*. There's scant concern for plausibility, just as nobody was expected to notice Maureen O'Hara's lipstick when she stands in for Athos in *Sons of the Musketeers* (aka *At Sword's Point*, 1952). "I'm no lady when I fight!" is O'Hara's war-cry: tutored by Fred Cavens (who appears briefly in the film as her instructor) she lashes out with such zeal that, according to co-star Cornel Wilde (a brilliant but unlucky swordsman, evidently), she put him in hospital for ten days with a cut on the eyeball.

Similarly, Jean Peters is very much her own woman as Anne of the Indies (1951), the head-strong pirate captain whose passion for government agent Louis Jourdan turns sour when she discovers he's married to Debra Paget. Directed by Jacques Tourneur, the film reaches a fiery climax when Anne engages in a hopeless sea-battle with Blackbeard the Pirate (Thomas Gomez)

in order to protect the man she loves/hates. As Anne confronts her mutinous crew, amid a hail of cannon-fire and destruction, the petulance of her unlikely leadership is suddenly replaced by a lethal authority. Sword in hand for almost the first time in the story, she fights a single duel in which the focus is entirely on her – her opponent's face is hardly glimpsed.

The fight is intriguing because although Anne wins it by shoving the anonymous sailor overboard, it represents her defeat. Tourneur's camera is static behind Anne's adversary as she falls back, drives forward, back, and forward again, as if trapped in an invisible box. Curiously, her own cutlass remains at her side throughout – she grabs other weapons instead of drawing her own. She only finally waves it, symbol of everything she has lost, in Tourneur's grand image of defiance, the ship ablaze behind her, before a last cannonade wipes her away. Glorious stuff, fashioned from unpromising material; where Tavernier has gone for an all-over-the-place style to match the technique of his heroine, Tourneur suggests a tighter discipline, not so much outdated as currently unfashionable.

Today's audience surely prefers to be everywhere at once, the Curtiz approach rather than, say, the Kurosawa method where battles are a confusion of detail but duels are formal displays of patience and skill. The classic Kurosawa duel is from *Seven Samurai* (1954) when Kyuzo, the itinerant professional who has no wish to fight, is challenged by a witless bully to prove his skill. No close-ups for this scene, except from among the fascinated bystanders; instead, a medium long-shot stares at the antagonists while they stare at each other. At last the chal-

lenger springs forward with a roar cut short by a single slash from the Samurai.

Kurosawa's choice of a simple panning shot for this collision becomes the more impressive the more one considers other ways of filming it. The slightly turning camera and the yell of the challenger come to a halt at the same jolting instant, like a physical blow to the spectator. A close-up or a montage of sword-drawing would merely have interrupted the clear demonstration of expertise; shots from above or other angles would have been a distraction; a tracking shot, with its implied identification (the forward movement of the challenger becoming *our* movement), would have been irrelevant. Famously, when Sanjuro Kuwabatake kills nine men in as many seconds in *Yojimbo* (1961), Kurosawa used a single high-angle revolve – there being no time, logically, for anything more elaborate. And in his repeat of the *Seven Samurai* duel, with Sanjuro and Muroto almost brow to brow at the end of *Tsubaki Sanjuro* (1962), he uses a single viewpoint with no movement at all and no cutaways to the onlookers who stand warily in the background. The two men stare at each other for so long that the move, when it comes, is a shock in itself, heightened by the gout of blood that instantly follows.

Compare this with Richard Lester's construction for the fight at the end of *Robin and Marian* (1976): Robin (Sean Connery) and the Sheriff of Nottingham (Robert Shaw) hack at each other until exhausted, allowing the director plenty of opportunity for cutaways which become gradually dominant, as if the outcome of the struggle had already been consigned to history. There is a beautiful shot of a shepherd among his flock as the two figures struggle on the horizon, and



**New swords for old:**  
Luke Skywalker faces  
Darth Vader in 'The Empire  
Strikes Back', a film that  
helped to revivify  
swashbuckling cinema

various perspectives on the armies waiting in rapt attention for the issue to be resolved. This habit of standing well back for the establishing panoramas, which Tavernier adopts for each of his fight scenes in *D'Artagnan's Daughter*, is also a characteristic of Lester's *Musketeers* trilogy, with its enjoyable chorus of commentators inhabiting the edges of the action. The emphasis is not so much on the swordplay, admirably steered as it is by fight and stunt arrangers William Hobbs and Joaquin Parra, as on the context – the idyllic woodland where Justine (Kim Cattrall) smoothly bests Raoul (C. Thomas Howell), or the misleading castle room with its array of trapdoors, sliding panels and multiple exits.

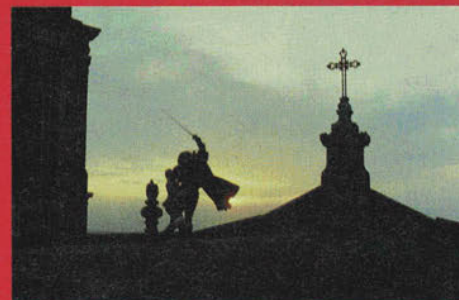
The new resurgence of swashbuckling cinema can partly be linked to the popularity of the light-sabres in the *Star Wars* trilogy, along with the whole notion of light itself as a weapon (from the torches in *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* to the strobes in *Alien*). The stunts in the trilogy were guided by Peter Diamond (with swordmaster Bob Anderson). Diamond was also the Highlander's opponent in the underground carpark on Russell Mulcahy's *Highlander*, in which the swordplay was resoundingly overstaged to incorporate every possible variation of the duellist image.

Tavernier, however, revives the glory days of swordsmanship with a Gallic affection. Balanced against splendid long-shots – the seething tavern, D'Artagnan and Eloise confronting Mazarin's men in the street, the boat-deck awash with duellists, the spectacular final battle of the Musketeers – Tavernier's duels are everything that his contemporaries, Patrice Chéreau (*La Reine Margot*) and Jean-Paul Rappeneau (*Cyrano de Bergerac*) seem to have avoided. Chéreau films the ugly bloodbath of St Bartholomew's Day in close-ups, not heroics, while Cyrano's epic fight with the hundred assassins seems beyond filming, a victory on a scale so unimaginable that Rappeneau fades it respectfully away into concealing mists.

But the particular appeal of *D'Artagnan's Daughter* lies in its cheerful illustrations of the unwritten tradition of the fight: that cheating is the safest way to win. (A helpful recent reminder of the rules is Pedro Olea's impeccably restrained *The Fencing Master*, 1992, which reveals as much anyone could wish to know about the etiquette of swordplay and its potential for drama and deception.) For all that Tavernier's Musketeers quote thrusts and gambits to each other as if they were chess-players, the code of genteel swordplay is briskly forgotten as push comes to shove. When Aramis, the most fastidious swordsman of the group, loses his sword to a swipe from his opponent, he unhesitatingly produces a pistol and shoots the man instead. Athos proudly displays his "Montparnasse Viper", a trick that ensures his adversary has no idea where the next blow is coming from, while Porthos simply bludgeons away with anything to hand. As for D'Artagnan, he can only narrowly save the day by a foul, unworthy and cruelly effective transfixion, giving his enemy no chance at all. "She is my daughter, Monsieur," he explains.

*D'Artagnan's Daughter* opens on 7 July and is reviewed on page 45 of this issue

## D'ARTAGNAN'S DAUGHTER



In his version of the classic duel, Bertrand Tavernier pits Eloise D'Artagnan against the malevolent Duc de Crassac. Using a hand-held camera, Tavernier says he

"concentrated on giving the fights a nervous and unrehearsed edginess: the way in which each character fights is intended to be an extension of their personality." Eloise is driven up the stairs, out onto the gallery high above the ground hall. Perpetuating another screen-fight tradition, they discuss their differences as the action proceeds.

Eloise pursues de Crassac across the roof of the monastery at Chazeilles, parrying all his attempts to dispose of her and ignoring such distractions as his claim that she is using a longer blade than his.

An effective move developed by Sophie Marceau for her role is the wild spin with sword extended that fends off all attackers. It keeps de Crassac at a distance until he feigns a heart-attack (a ploy borrowed from Peter Boyle's resourceful villain in *'The Scarlet Buccaneer'* aka *'Swashbuckler'*) and Eloise drops her guard.

In an instant, de Crassac flicks her sword away and his blade is at the heroine's throat, ready for the kill...



# UNSETTLING

**After 'La Reine Margot', 'D'Artagnan's Daughter' confirms that French film is now drawn to French history, with a focus on national and sexual politics. By Ginette Vincendeau**

As seen from Britain, *La Reine Margot*, *Le Colonel Chabert* and *D'Artagnan's Daughter* form part of the growing and (for some) tediously predictable body of costume dramas known as 'heritage' cinema. This term has gained currency on account of the films' opulent recreation of the past and use of canonical literature, and by analogy with the heritage industry (retro-fashion, theme parks and so on). To this genre also belong such films as *Jean de Florette*, *Howards End*, *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Babette's Feast*, premiered, typically, at the Curzon Mayfair cinema in London (as were *Margot* and *Chabert*) and targeting a middle-class and 'middlebrow' audience. Being among the few European films to penetrate the world market, they increasingly define European/French cinema as an international luxury product with high audience appeal (if low critical status).

But while *Margot*, *Chabert* and *D'Artagnan's Daughter* fit such a genre, their concentration on precise periods, events and/or characters from French history suggest quite a separate category. Indeed, what has dominated French heritage films over the past 15 years is neither idyllic rurality (despite *Jean de Florette* and a few others) nor the celebration of grand-bourgeois domesticity and public school rituals in the British tradition, but a revisiting of history; for example the Revolution and its aftermath (*Danton*, *Chouans!*, *La Révolution française I* and *II*, *Chabert*). World War II and the German occupation have also been a rich field, as well as the colonial past (this in common with Britain). This historical focus draws on a rich French filmic tradition which includes such auteur films as Abel Gance's *Napoléon*, Raymond Bernard's *Les Misérables* and Jean Renoir's *La Marseillaise*, but also dozens of melodramas, erotic-romantic comedies and swashbucklers. Its two golden eras were the German occupation and the 1950s 'tradition of quality': a version of *Chabert* was made in 1943, starring Raimu; a version of *Margot* in 1954, with Jeanne Moreau. Nineteenth-century historical literature is clearly central to these films: Alexandre Dumas (père) and Balzac, together with Victor Hugo, Eugène Sue, Paul Féval and Edmond Rostand.

Balzac, who considered himself "more a historian than a novelist", published *Chabert* in February-March 1832; Dumas' *Margot* was also published in instalments (*feuilletons*) in *La Presse* in 1845, and staged in February 1847 at Dumas' own Théâtre Historique, with performances

running from 6.30pm to 3am(!). His *Les Trois Mousquetaires* and sequel *Vingt Ans après* (to which *D'Artagnan's Daughter* is a further, 'imaginary' sequel) came out in 1844 and 1845. All these appeared under the July Monarchy (1830-1848), a period which witnessed an explosion in historiography, libraries and museums, and a parallel development of the popular historical novel linked to both new press freedom and the fashion for Walter Scott. Equally, this revisiting of the past was part of a collective stock-taking and renegotiation of national identity in the aftermath of the Revolution and Empire. The contemporary recourse in films to Balzac's and Dumas' mediations of the past must also be seen in the light of struggles over French national identity, which a conflation of factors are destabilising: the passing of the last great populist leader (de Gaulle), the end of the *trente glorieuses* years of economic boom, the demise of the colonial empire and the rise of multiculturalism. While battles rage over national identity in the political arena (among them the rise of the National Front), the present concentration on historical fictions begs the question of how representations of history are mobilised in films to engage with it.

*Margot*, *Chabert* and *D'Artagnan's Daughter* are stylistically different: respectively an auteur-inflected rewriting of Dumas (Patrice Chéreau the auteur), a classic Balzac adaptation directed by Yves Angelo (ex-cinematographer on such heritage classics as *Tous les matins du monde*) and Bertrand Tavernier's pastiche of Dumas swashbucklers. But they share an awareness of their antecedents, as do industry and audience: 1994 saw the video release of the 1943 *Chabert* and the 1954 *Margot*, as well as reissues of Dumas' *Margot* and Balzac's *Chabert* in many paperback editions, some available in supermarkets for as little as FF10 (£1), the latter neatly timed for the beginning of the school term; indeed, a veritable *Margot* industry was fed by new or reissued biographies of Marguerite de Valois, debates in the press and television chat shows. The genre is of course particularly conducive to such industry practices, but their appearance also emphasises the place of fictional representation within a constellation of historical knowledge, which mixes the learned and the popular, the school manual with the romantic novel, the specialist historical magazine with cartoons (the 'famous love affairs of French history' kind): it's a circulation of what might be called

'memories of history'. As *Cahiers du cinéma* famously noted, all historical films are set in the "future perfect" tense, setting up questions the spectator already knows the answers to: thus Catherine de Medici in *Margot* consults a horoscope about her three sons, Mazarin in *D'Artagnan's Daughter* mutters "I forgot to tell [Louis XIV] not to revoke the Edict of Nantes," (he did, in 1685), and the triumph of the ultra-aristocrats in *Chabert* is known to be short-lived. While this trope reinforces existing myths rather than questioning them, it is also one of the pleasures of such films, throwing spectators back to childhood history books and literature.

## Plots and poisonings

Where Balzac saw himself as a historian, Dumas was candid about authenticity's poverty before romance and drama. Yet his choice of periods was not accidental. The end of the Valois dynasty (1589) was conveniently eventful for a writer (plots, curses, mysterious deaths); it was also a transitional era, allowing for dramatic contrasts between 'medieval' practices – massacres, superstition, poisonings – and the refinement of the Renaissance, displayed in costumes, music and parades. The late sixteenth century (*Margot*) and early to mid-seventeenth century (*D'Artagnan*) also provided wars of religion and other conflicts (with rulers struggling to hold the country together), presaging the deep splits in French society which surfaced, for example, during the Revolution and the German occupation. It is perhaps not surprising that the 1954 *Margot*, made when the traumatic divisions of the Vichy period were most repressed, gives the St Barthélémy massacre of the Huguenots nine minutes of screen time and treats it almost as a jolly romp. Chéreau by comparison greatly expands the massacre and spreads violence throughout the film, reinforced by claustrophobic *mise en scène* and intensely physical performances. Parallels are made with contemporary religious wars (Bosnia) and with the Holocaust, with images of bodies thrown into a mass grave, images with an added resonance at a time when the French role in the Holocaust is at last being exposed. Interestingly, however, Chéreau retains the demonisation of Italians common to many earlier French historical films set during this period. His poison-maker René le Florentin may not speak with the fake Italian accent his 1954 counterpart had, but the characterisation ►



# MEMORIES



BE STILL: POSTERS AND DESIGNS



Three versions of a national past: the 1954 version of 'La Reine Margot', with Jeanne Moreau as the pert heroine of classical comedy, top; Gérard Depardieu, as the bridge between the social classes in the remake of 'Le Colonel Chabert', far left; Patrice Chéreau's version of 'La Reine Margot', left



◀ of Catherine de Medici as evil black widow and perverted mother lurking behind pillars is stupefying. She is played magnificently, by Virna Lisi in 1994 and Francoise Rosay in 1954, but these roles belong in a tradition combining hatred of powerful women and of foreigners (as do images of the 'Austrian' Marie-Antoinette in countless Revolution dramas).

*Chabert* begins in 1817, as the Restoration ultra-aristocrats are busy reclaiming their *ancien régime* privileges. The new *Chabert* greatly develops the contrast between this new élite (an amalgam of old aristocracy and new money) and the poor. At the same time it reinforces the consensual narrative resolution of the original text. Class divisions are bridged in the narrative by the new professional bourgeoisie (Derville, the excellent Fabrice Luchini), and transcended symbolically by Chabert, the hero of the Napoleonic army who bypasses the class struggle instead of fighting it. The "10,000" dead of the French army are embodied in Chabert's "unknown soldier", a destitute on the high moral ground who is reborn to claim the imperial war as revolutionary heritage. A foundling raised to the ranks of *noblesse d'empire*, Chabert also represents the meritocracy that was to build Republican France (comparable to *Les Misérables*' Jean Valjean). His courage is, as he puts it, his "only patrimony". But in actual fact, his memory is his patrimony, the memory that enables him to claim the positive legacy of the Revolution and Empire, one that is inscribed in law. Their evil legacy on the other hand is concentrated (by book and films) in the new class, represented by the Comtesse Ferraud. Greedy for money, she is, as we soon learn, tainted by her past as a prostitute, her identity thus shifting from social to sexual. The 1994 *Chabert* chooses to punish her more than Balzac does (in his *oeuvre* she continues a successful social life in several novels); it adds a seduction of Ferraud to parallel that of Chabert, as well as the scene where Derville delivers her come-uppance.

Sexual stereotyping is more overt in Dumas, with wicked ladies and evil queen mothers surrounding the male heroes. *D'Artagnan's Daughter*, this modern sequel, pits the ageing Musketeers – who therefore have a past – against a new 'Lady in Red', an evil counterpart to D'Artagnan's young daughter (Sophie Marceau). On the one hand this places the story within the classic French father-daughter narrative, one which director Tavernier has himself reworked (*La Passion Béatrice*, *Daddy Nostalgie*); on the other it reinforces the pattern whereby male identity is (however fancifully) historical, and female identity sexual. In this 'gendering' of popular history, Margot has been a particularly interesting case. A historically marginal personality, she is given prominence through her (vastly exaggerated) romantic and sexual life over her actual political ambitions and literary achievements. Dumas did raise her profile (she barely appears in history books), but he did so by sexualising her, starting with her name (Margot, as opposed to Marguerite, implying familiarity, connoting naive femininity: in France, "to make Margot cry" is a derogatory description of melodrama). The 1954 Margot is a pert heroine of classical comedy; she visits her

lover La Môle as a masked courtesan and appears coyly naked (the use of a body double for Moreau was much commented upon). Chéreau's invention of a scene where Margot cruises the streets after her unconsummated wedding night is more explicit, though hardly historical, and further reinforces Margot's sexual stereotyping. Isabelle Adjani's mixture of intensity, glamour and fragility creates a highly charged Margot whose antecedents are to be found in her own title roles in *The Story of Adèle H* and *Camille Claudel* rather than in the 1954 Margot. As a woman desired by rival men, she distantly evokes Arletty's Garance in *Les Enfants du paradis*, an embodiment of France caught between warring factions. If Margot's mother is demonised for entering the political arena, Margot is elevated to the status of a national symbol (a Marianne *avant-la-lettre*) at the price of

## The French heritage film adopts Hollywood-style 'super-production' values while establishing its difference through historical subject-matter and language

staying out of it. Where Chabert's saintliness emerges from historical circumstances, Margot's transcends them (the actual Marguerite de Valois unsuccessfully manoeuvred to establish a power base for herself, first with her brothers, then her husband).

### Heritage stars

As well as engaging with popular historical myths, and inserting themselves in literary and filmic traditions, *Margot*, *Chabert* and *D'Artagnan* are heritage products in an industrial sense. Their high budgets and production values (decors and costumes are magnificent in all three), their prestige producers (Claude Berri at Renn Productions, Jean-Louis Livi), directors (Patrice Chéreau, Bertrand Tavernier), literary sources and stars all form part of a strategy to fight an industrial battle (against Hollywood) and an aesthetic one (against television). Unlike auteur cinema, which opposes Hollywood in terms of *mise en scène* and subject-matter, the French heritage film takes a two-pronged line of attack, adopting Hollywood-style 'super-production' values while establishing its difference through historical subject-matter and (not negligibly) language. At the same time the recourse to canonical writers and historical subjects allows these Franco-centric films to address audiences both at home and internationally, by turning the house of Valois (and the *ancien régime* generally), the Three Musketeers and Balzac's Restoration into easily graspable French (or even European) myths.

Key to this strategy are the stars, who must map their existing personas onto fully formed (actual or fictional) identities. The historical

film solves this difficulty by multiplying performance opportunities. Balzac makes Derville exclaim, after hearing Chabert's confession, "I... have seen the most skilful actor of our time." With Chabert played by Raimu in 1943 and Depardieu in 1994, it is easy to see why both films kept these lines in and made the confession a virtuoso display (both monologues are shot in long *plans-séquences*; especially long in the 1994 film). Both draw on the stars' personas as populist heroes (though the 'calligraphic' 1943 film, with strong lighting effects and unusual camera angles turns the earthy Raimu into a spooky Chabert). Depardieu by 1994 has become the male 'national' star of heritage cinema, with Danton, *Jean de Florette*, *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *Chabert*. While such parts are clearly decided upon with Depardieu in mind, his success as a star is directly linked to his appropriateness to a specifically French literary canon. In all these films he plays 'larger than life' men-of-the-people who have climbed the social ladder while retaining 'popular' roots, chiming with his extra-cinematic identity. In the case of *Germinal*, he stressed his adequacy for the part of Maheu in terms of his own origins. His heritage roles are particularly well served by his performance style, a mixture of theatricality and naturalism, echoing the genre itself.

Though *Margot* also combines theatricality with naturalism, symbolised by the ravishing but soiled costumes, Adjani's Margot is rarely touched by the ambient squalor, except when her magnificent dresses absorb the blood of La Môle, or of her brother Charles IX. Close-ups emphasise the milky opalescence of her face, her glittering jewels, bare shoulders and *décolletés*. Despite Adjani's considerable talent for expressing intense passion, her visual treatment duplicates her narrative isolation from the surrounding maelstrom: she is the star among the actors (as her *couture* look isolated her from the grime of the metro in *Subway*). Adjani recently – astutely – said that she had "always been such a French product"; here her 'French' image of beauty and glamour, though central to Margot's appeal, collides oddly with the overall project.

A classic criticism of historical and heritage films is that they turn away from a difficult present in order to comfort their audience with a rosy picture of the past. But neither *Margot* nor *Chabert* present a particularly rosy picture. *Chabert* celebrates the memory of Napoleonic glory, but represents an era which has forgotten it; its general tone is one of doubt and suspicion. Violence in *Margot* permeates even the wedding festivities. Both films' dominant colour schemes are sombre. Divisions among the French come to the fore – unlike for example in *Cyrano de Bergerac* (written by Rostand in the more chauvinistic mood of the new Third Republic). *D'Artagnan's Daughter* ageing, tired heroes eventually whip up the enthusiasm to re-inhabit their younger selves, but the first part of the film is rather downbeat. Yet these films remain immensely pleasurable, for their spectacular qualities and energy, but also for their evocation of the past, however traumatic that past was. It may be that, like Chabert, memory itself is all we have left as patrimony.



# WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE FILM?

Chances are that we'll have a copy in our library of over 10,000 titles.

Filmbank is the UK's largest distributor of feature films on 16mm and video, from classic oldies to the latest releases, and we want **YOU** to join the thousands of current members who use our service regularly throughout the year for personal, educational or film society use. **WHY NOT RING US TODAY?!**

- start a film club
- host a movie classic evening
- hold special themed movie events
- host a film debate/symposium
- ideal for special occasions

Now Booking:

**Legends of the Fall • Leon • Disclosure**  
**Pulp Fiction • Natural Born Killers • Star Trek: Generations**  
**Heavenly Creatures • Quiz Show**  
**Bullets Over Broadway • Little Women**  
**Shallow Grave • Madness of King George**  
**Outbreak • Eat Drink Man Woman**



Filmbank Distributors Ltd Grayton House  
 498-504 Fulham Road London SW6 5NH  
 Tel. 0171 386 9909/5411

# Channel

—VIDEO FILMS—



WE CAN SUPPLY ALL VIDEO FILMS LISTED / REVIEWED IN SIGHT AND SOUND

|                                       |                                      |                                     |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A SENSE OF FREEDOM 4.99               | IMMORAL TALES (BOROWCZYK) 15.99      | TRUE ROMANCE 14.99                  |
| BLACK NARCISUS 4.99                   | BLANCHE (BOROWCZYK) 15.99            | KENNETH ANGER VOL.1-4 14.99 EACH    |
| LIFE & DEATH/COLONEL BLIMP 4.99       | THE LAST SEDUCTION 10.99             | PAINTED HEART 15.99                 |
| STRICTLY BALLROOM 4.99                | RESERVOIR DOGS W/S-L/DISC 24.99      | SMASH PALACE (NZ 1981) 12.99        |
| TIE ME UP! TIE ME DOWN! 4.99          | THE LIFE OF OHARU (TANAKA) 15.99     | X-FILES (VOLS.1,2,3 & 4) 10.99 EACH |
| SCUM 6.99                             | THE DEVIL'S EYE (BERGHMAN) 15.99     | RED ROCK WEST 10.99                 |
| GHOSTLY LOVE (WU-KWO REM) 13.99       | DALLAS DOLL (SANDRA BERNHARD) 15.99  | EATING RAOUL 14.99                  |
| TRouble IN MIND (ALAN RUDOLF) 15.99   | TESTIMONY (DIR. TONY PALMER) 15.99   | LIFE OF BRIAN 10.99                 |
| CHOOSE ME (DIR. ALAN RUDOLF) 15.99    | SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE 15.99         | KURONEKO 15.99                      |
| BUKOWSKI AT BELLEVUE (1970) 15.99     | MIRANDA (TINTO BRASS) 12.99          | DOGS IN SPACE (JULY 24) 10.99       |
| DR CRIPPEN (DONALD PLEASANCE) 10.99   | GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS (JULY 3) 4.99    | DUNE 10.99                          |
| A MATTER OF LIFE & DEATH 9.99         | TOUT VA BIEN (JEAN-LUC GODARD) 15.99 | YEAR OF THE DRAGON 10.99            |
| TWIN PEAKS-COMLETE (10 TPS) 99.99     | 4 SHORTS BY HERZOG 15.99             | PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE 12.99       |
| FAUST (JAN SVENMAJER) 13.99           | LADY OF THE CAMELIAS 15.99           | GLEN OR GLENDA 12.99                |
| BRANDED TO KILL (SUZUKI SEIJUN) 13.99 | SUCCESS IS THE BEST REVENGE 15.99    | D.O.A. (1950) 12.99                 |
| RED DWARF VI (3 EPISODES) 12.99       | LA CARNE (THE FLESH) 15.99           | YOUNG SOUL REBELS 10.99             |
| DARK WATERS (MARIANO BAINO) 10.99     | LA RUPTURE (CHABROL) 15.99           | FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN 10.99    |
| DEATH RACE 2000 10.99                 | LIFESPAN (KLAUS KINSKI) 15.99        | THE BIG PARADE (1927 B/W) 14.99     |
| NUNS OF SAINT ARCHANGEL W/S 12.99     | HITCHCOCK AT WAR (2 SHORTS) 12.99    | GREED (1925 B/W) 14.99              |
| ROMEO IS BLEEDING (OLDMAN) 10.99      | EVA (DIR. JOSEPH LOSEY) 14.99        | BEN HUR-A TALE OF CHRIST 14.99      |
| GOODBYE PORK PIE (NZ 1980) 12.99      | QUE LA BÊTE MEURE 15.99              | FLESH & THE DEVIL (1927 B/W) 14.99  |
| HEART OF DARKNESS 12.99               | JEU DE MASSACRE 15.99                | DAYS OF BEING WILD (KAR WAI) 12.99  |
| JAIL BAIT (ED WOOD) 12.99             | MI VIDA LOCA (MY CRAZY LIFE) 15.99   | BLOOD & BLACK LACE (BAYA) 12.99     |
| THE HARDER THEY COME 12.99            | SMILES OF A SUMMER NIGHT (BOX) 21.99 | MACABRE (LAIBERTO BAYA) 12.99       |
| MYSTERY TRAIN (JULY 3) 15.99          | ANOTHER WAY (HUNGARY 1982) 15.99     | LA FRONTERA (RICARDO LARRAIN) 15.99 |
| WOMAN NEXT DOOR (JULY 3) 15.99        | BABETTE'S FEAST 14.99                | <b>RESERVOIR DOGS</b>               |
| I WAS A MALE WAR BRIDE 12.99          | HENRY V / HAMLET (DOUBLE) 12.99      | RESERVE YOUR EX-RENTAL COPY NOW     |
| THE HANGING GALE (2 TAPES) 19.99      | TAXI DRIVER/MIDNIGHT EXPRESS 12.99   | WITH RES/DOGS T-SHIRT, LIMITED      |
| ASTOUNDING SHE MONSTER 12.99          | DARK HABITS (ALMODOVAR) 15.99        | STOCKS AVAILABLE 24TH JULY £25.00   |

**POST & PACKING** U.K.: £2-1 Tape (50p each additional tape) Europe: £6.50 up to 3 tapes (£3 each additional tape) Outside Europe: £12 up to 3 tapes (All orders recorded delivery)  
**CATALOGUE** Comprehensive video catalogue: UK £2 Rest of the world £3 - over 17,000 titles. All prices include VAT.

TEL: Mon-Fri 10am-6pm FAX: E-MAIL: 0171-372 2025 0171-372 2072 Channelent@Delphi.Com 58 Salisbury Road, London NW6 6ND, UK

## FILM PRODUCTION COURSE

Learn by shooting a film under the supervision of top professionals at London's major production centre.

**Prominent Studios is the only feature film production centre where training is available.**

The "Future in Films" course comprises of intense, practical evening and weekend sessions. You will learn the essential aspects of film making by writing and shooting your own production with other students.

## PANICO WORKSHOP

On successful completion of the course, you may join the "Panico" Workshop. This will give you access to the equipment, facilities and advice, enabling you, together with other students, to make your own productions.

Course Unit, Prominent Studios,  
 68a Delancy St, London NW1 7RY.  
 Tel: 071 284 1163

UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER

## MA Film & TV

Central London based masters programme

Offers the following modules:

- Theories of Authorship
- Structuralism and Genre
- The Film and TV Audience
- Realism and Anti-Realism
- Film, Culture and Society
- Hollywood 1900-1940
- British Cinema 1927-47
- British Television Drama
- The Documentary Tradition
- Public Service Broadcasting
- TV Genres and Gender
- Third World Cinema
- Soviet Cinema
- Production Studies
- Women and Film Narrative
- European Cinema since 1945

Contact Dr Robert Peck, School of Communication, 18-22 Riding House Street, London W1P 7PD  
 Tel 0171 911 5000 ext 2738

## africa & the history of cinematic ideas

an international conference

september 9 & 10

national film theatre, london

Cinema hurtles towards the 21st Century. What are the implications for one of the film world's most exciting prospects? A combination of Africa's most experienced filmmakers and its strongest young talents will gather for the first time in the UK to discuss ideas of power and art moving into the millennium.

more a question of who *won't* be there than who will

## screen griots

John Akomfrah (Ghana/UK)  
 Aama Al Bakri (Egypt)  
 Roy Ames (UK)  
 Imruh Bakari (St Kitts/UK)  
 Bassek Ba Kobio (Cameroun)  
 John Badenhoof (South Africa)  
 Ola Balogun (Nigeria)  
 Ferid Bouhedir (Tunisia)  
 Mbye Cham (Gambia/US)  
 Tahar Cheria (Tunisia)  
 Cheick Oumar Cisseko (Mali)  
 Manthia Diawara (Mali/US)  
 Samir Faïd (Egypt)  
 Teshome Gabriel (Ethiopia/US)  
 Haile Gerima (Ethiopia/US)  
 Mariama Hima (Niger)  
 Med Hondo (Mauritania)  
 Rose Issa (Lebanon/UK)

T Mahosa (Zimbabwe)  
 Kobena Mercer (Ghana/UK)  
 V Y Mudimbe (US/ Congo)  
 Idrissa Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso)  
 Kwate Nee Owoo (Ghana)  
 Jim Pine (UK/US)  
 Colin Prescott (UK)  
 Nourredine Sali (Morocco)  
 Ousmane Sembene (Senegal)  
 Ella Shohat (US)  
 Clyde Taylor (US)  
 Moulda Tlati (Tunisia)  
 Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (Kenya/US)  
 Claire Watkins (US)  
 Peter Wollen (UK)



CELEBRATING THE MOVING IMAGE

£100 for two days  
 £60 concession  
 £60 per day  
 Includes two film screenings

The Screen Griot programme begins in August and includes touring film seasons, a series of talks by filmmaker Haile Gerima, video and film releases, a teaching pack for schools and two publications. For more information contact: African & Caribbean Unit • British Film Institute • Tel: 0171 255 1444 Fax: 0171 436 7950



● In an address to art students in his home town of Philadelphia Robert Crumb declares the feature-cartoon of his *Fritz the Cat* an "embarrassment" and its director Ralph Bakshi a schlockmeister; towards the end of this documentary (made by friend, publisher and long-time collaborator Terry Zwigoff) Crumb roundly insults a young Hollywood producer when the producer dares to suggest that he knows where Crumb is coming from by saying, "Hey, I'm your kind of guy, we're talking toilet, I love it." So Crumb hates Hollywood: but it is interesting to speculate how Hollywood might have turned his life into a classic, mythological biopic – if only to free one's mind from the disturbing traces left by this film.

The first act would have shown a sensitive child from a humble background (although such pictures tend to exaggerate the unpromising surroundings the great artist sprang from, here no such hyperbole would be necessary). Misunderstood by an overbearing father, bullied by brutish good-looking High School jocks, he discovers through the careful nurturing of an older brother the one thing at which he can excel: drawing cartoons. The epiphanal moment: through his pen he can express all his subdued rage and wreak revenge on those who put him down. He is freed from the pressure to be normal and sets out to find a society conducive to his individuality.

Second act: arriving in San Francisco at the height of Flower Power he finds that, though he in no way shares in the psychedelic excesses around him, he can nevertheless *draw* his way into society – his pen makes him rich and famous, he becomes the friend of rock stars, hippie chicks lie down before him. But it is not enough. After an intense and revealing transcendent experience he is transformed – he returns to consciousness entirely in touch with his deepest desires.

Third act: redemption in the arms of a living, mature woman who appreciates and encourages his talents; withdrawal from the world to an idyllic country retreat with his wife and a beautiful daughter who inherits his talents. Recognised by the world for the great artist he is, he can live at one with himself, his demons exorcised, his past hurdles surmounted by an integration of art and life. California Dreaming!

In the very first sequence of *Crumb*, the artist reveals that he has no idea what he is doing when he is drawing, that he gets suicidal when he cannot draw and suicidal when he does and that he only started drawing because of his elder brother's obsession with comics. Thus are most of the major themes of the film laid out. Under prompting from the director the artist phones his mother's house and requests that they come over to do an interview with this brother, Charles. This request is refused. If it had stayed that way – if Charles had continued in his refusal as Crumb's two sisters Carol and Sandy continued to refuse – then this film would have turned out very different, if indeed it had turned out at all.

And so we are taken into the heart of the Crumb family, a lower-middle-class American Gothic milieu with none of the Addams' family's saving aristocratic graces. We also realise why this film is 'presented' by David Lynch, who could only envy and never hope to invent such grotesque psychosexual dysfunction.

The Crumb *pater familias* was some kind of

# DRAWING IT OUT



**What kind of family affair does the new documentary 'Crumb' reveal when it delves in the life of 60s comic-book artist Robert Crumb?**  
**By Michael Eaton**

salesman, clinging desperately to white-collar conformity in McCarthy's America – he was the author of a manual entitled *Training People Effectively*, though he signally failed with his three sons. The mother, who became addicted to amphetamines as a side effect of 50s weight-loss mania, is still with us, living in reclusive squalor with Charles. Charles it was who 'discovered' the *Treasure Island* of cartoon fantasy – but now he never leaves his room and has been on medication for the past 20 years. Maxon, Crumb's younger brother, lives as a transient in a San Francisco flop house. Neither the coherence with which Charles speaks of his detachment from the human race, his narcissistic suicidal tendencies and his mother's denial of the strangeness of her strange brood, nor the cogency with which Maxon analyses the sibling rivalry of the household and its effect on his life, can disguise the fact that Crumb's brothers are condemned to be forever bizarre, depressive people.

At this point in the proceedings we've seen Crumb enthusiastically received by a college audience, present at a gallery opening of a one-man show, feted by an internationally famous art critic who sees him as a successor of Brueghel, Goya and Daumier, and enjoying his record collection in his country retreat with his wife and daughter. So we may have been suckered into feeling that he has escaped the curse of his genetic blight, turning his artistic talent into something that can communicate with the rest of the species. We may even suspect we're in the presence of another piece of 60s propaganda in which the drug- and/or counter-cultural underground emerges as the salvation for the children of a repressed, buttoned-down post-war America. But Zwigoff's film – which at first seems so commonplace in its documentary construction – is far too cannily and insidiously structured to grant an audience any such stereotypically wished-for relief.

Robert Crumb's favourite music is the ragtime, blues and traditional jazz he collects in fragile 78s – a restrained, dignified, rule-governed, harmonious slice of American nostalgia. It is a world away from the freeform, acid-inspired improvisations of the Grateful Dead with whom, as legend seems to have it, he lived in the Haight-Ashbury days. Truth is, Crumb never liked hippie music or clothes, or indeed hippies. He only hung out with them in the hope of getting some of that Free Love they kept talking about. The movement with which his work is most associated, and iconic of, is one he never felt a part of. The self-portrait familiar to all his readers – of a nerdy, uptight geek – is not cartoon caricature, but documentary realism. Except if anything, as this film so graphically demonstrates, the reality is far more grotesque and disturbing than the cartoon.

One aspect of Crumb's character that marked him off as an oddball in the eyes of his erstwhile colleagues in the underground comics movement was that he didn't even have to think twice before refusing the offer of hundreds of thousands of dollars to appear on the *Tonight Show* or to design a Rolling Stones album sleeve. While the rest of his generation were turning on and tuning in the better to sell out, Crumb devoted himself to the graphic depiction of his dark side. While those around him were parroting the slogan "Let it all hang out", Crumb took it literally. It is the resul-



tant horrorshow that the middle of the film concentrates on.

In the male corner: Robert Hughes, the art critic of *Time* magazine. For him, Crumb's work is in a fine misanthropic tradition, a passionate Rabelaisian carnival of lusting, suffering humanity and imaginative gaze that is painfully disturbing because it refuses to shrink from the truth. This is graphic art as social satire, unappreciated in America because of the ruling ideologies of Utopianism and Puritanism. In the female corner: Deirdre English, former editor of *Mother Jones*, the leftwing magazine, and Trina Robbins, cartoonist. For them, Crumb's work may start out as satire but by exposing the underbelly of American life results in a self-indulgent, misogynist orgy of his own, personal fantasies becoming a species of pornography, revealing nothing more than Crumb's own arrested juvenile development.

The argument really hinges not on art – all commentators are in no doubt (who could be?) about Crumb's graphic brilliance – but on *communication*. If Crumb's dystopia somehow illuminates the world we live in, then his lubriciously available Amazons (with overdeveloped thighs and underdeveloped heads, or none at all, some in the shape of birds and beasts) is social commentary. If it merely gives vent to his own solipsistic, masturbatory fears of impotence, it is case history. If it is put before the public it is irresponsible incitement: in revealing his own warpedness he validates the expression of depravity in others. When the unrestrained male libido hangs out maybe it's time to shove it back in. Maybe civilisation's none too comfortable with its discontents.

Crumb himself seems sublimely removed from this debate: he is content to let loose his fantasies and be as surprised as the next man or woman when they emerge with such consistent regularity. They're out in the open for better or worse, and if they display a deep seated racism or sexism, then that's precisely because such feelings are deep seated in the white male American psyche. His wife Aline says that he reveals his id in undiluted form; his hostility to her gender seems to pose her no threat.

Perhaps the most psychoanalytic response comes from the most unlikely mouthpiece: Dian Hanson, a career pornographer and editor of *Leg Show*, is shooting a cheesy photospread of Crumb surrounded by a bevy of models who put flesh on his fantasies – an experience he seems to relish, without irony. For her, men who are obsessed with the lower half of women's bodies have never grown up, and are still powerless children overawed by their gargantuan mothers. Men's propensities for fetishistic fixation makes them easy to manipulate. Crumb, ever the pissed-off outsider, replies that women fixate on power – a remark which acknowledges his hatred and his fear all at once.

But just when we think we know where we are with this film, just when we feel most comfortable with the terms of an insoluble debate on the psycho-structure of male sexuality, Zwigoff undermines any audience complacency by revealing aspects of the Crumb family history that seem unbridled by any account. As with the wedding at Cana, the headiest brew is saved till last.

From Charcot to Oprah the photographic image has turned its gaze on weirdos. Crumb, too,

is fascinated by outcasts – perhaps his most realistic, most empathetic sketches are of bums on the street (from life), and of nineteenth-century inhabitants of female lunacy wards (from photographs). But nothing in the Salpetiere gallery comes close to the brothers Crumb. Words cannot convey the horror of this family of compulsive drawers.

When we visit Maxon again we are privileged to see not only his collection of oil paintings of the female form (which even so generous an apologist for masculine fantasy as Hughes would be pressed to justify) but also his self-made bed of nails on which he assumes a lotus position of self-mortification – though not when begging in the street, as the city types of the business district find it hard to accept. After this it comes as no shock to learn he has a history of molesting women.

When we see Charles for the final time we are granted a peek at his artistic development: and at the way his narcissistic crush on the *Treasure Island* character Jim Hawkins, surrounded by pirates, evolved into total graphomania, the line being abandoned for ever tinier and more incomprehensible words. After this it is almost a relief to discover that he committed suicide after the film was shot. His mother is presumably still being pursued by her invisible enemies.

Crumb's response to his family is a pained, unbelieving laughter: "Haw, haw, haw, Jee-sus!" His only normal relationship is with his daughter – and he's teaching her to draw cartoons!

The cumulative effect is to demonstrate that human beings can have total awareness of their own psychopathological tendencies without in any way being able to overcome them. Psychological insight does not lead to transcendence. Crumb operates as a howling "No!" to the Californian

therapy's "Affirmative!" If the operative myth of contemporary America, at its most extreme in its most westerly state, is that bodies, noses, lives and souls can be continually remodelled through liposuction, rhinoplasty, psychobabble and whateverology, then this film is as anti-American as any communist front.

But this is not a satire on the Utopianism that Robert Hughes mocks, even though Crumb's California is an eternal Haight Street populated by pissed old hippies with hardly a brain cell between them, and by young tourists with minds entirely colonised by consumerism. Crumb cannot escape his background through his art; rather through his art he is condemned forever to relive it. His next stop is the south of France.

*Crumb* is a rare instance of a film which has no unconscious – it refuses any reading which it does not itself supply, and second-guesses our responses before we can make them. Using the apparently formless, haphazard techniques of observational cinema (albeit a species of that genre which recognises the existence of the camera) it offers up a structuring of a tiny slice of reality which is as dense, as textured, as disturbing as its subject matter. A man who has been available only through his work up to this point is now laid out for all the world by the prying eye of a camera wielded by a friend. One thing is for sure: after living through this document the viewer may well wish to see or read no more of Robert Crumb and the dysfunction that surrounds him. *Crumb* may be unique in the history of documentary: a film which tells us more about its theme than we need to know; a film which completely exhausts its subject. *Crumb* opens on 30 June and is reviewed on page 44 of this issue



Robert Crumb's original 'Fritz the Cat', above left; Crumb at a photo shoot in Terry Zwigoff's documentary, above



# From Buster to Marty

My father taught me to love clowns. He hung paintings of them on almost every wall of our house. My earliest movie memories are of my father and I sitting on the sofa in that den, watching Laurel and Hardy on our black and white Zenith. It was my father who introduced me to Buster Keaton. "David! David! Come in here, quick! You've got to see this!"

In my early teens I discovered movie books. My father brought the first ones into the house: *Classics of the Silent Screen* by Joe Franklin, and Kevin Brownlow's *The Parade's Gone By*. I pored over them for hours, particularly the chapters that dealt with the great clowns: Chaplin, Laurel and Hardy, Lloyd... and Keaton. Then I began buying books of my own. *Mr. Laurel and Mr. Hardy* by John McCabe was my favourite, until I discovered *Keaton* by Rudi Blesh.

For a decade after sitting down to read that book I had but one ruling passion in life: Buster Keaton. I fixated on Keaton's head gag man, Clyde Bruckman. Bruckman co-directed Keaton's masterpiece, *The General*, then went on to work with most of the other top comics of that era: Harold Lloyd, Laurel and Hardy, W. C. Fields, the Three Stooges, Abbott and Costello. But it was with Keaton that Bruckman really mated.

I began to fantasise of myself as Bruckman: pulling up to the Keaton studio in my Pierce Arrow roadster; sitting around the gag room with Jean Havez, Joe Mitchell and Buster, cooking up sight gags for deserted ocean liners, runaway locomotives and daydreaming projectionists.

Early one evening that very summer, my father's laughter erupted from the den again: "David! David! Come here! You've got to see this guy! Quick! You're missing it!" I walked into the living room. On the Sony colour Trinitron was a silent movie. Not one from the 20s however, since the image was in colour. It opened with a superimposed title: *The Loneliness of a Long Distance Golfer*. A thin little man in an absurdly huge knit cap and knickers strode up to a golf tee with his caddy in tow. He was pop-eyed like a chameleon, his engorged pupils bulging in radically different directions so that you weren't really sure where he was looking, or what he was feeling. He dropped a ball on the tee, performed a waddling little dance, then swung, hooking the shot wildly. The ball flew off the fairway and landed on top of a mound of sand in a dump truck parked on a road adjacent to the course. Undaunted, the golfer strode to the truck, climbed on top of it with his loyal caddy right behind, and took a swing just as the truck rumbled off down the street. He missed the ball, fell into the sand, picked himself up and swung again.

And so it progressed with the logic of a nightmare. Cut to a close-up of the ball on its latest resting place, a heap of soil. Pull back slowly to reveal the soil is in a gondola car on a moving freight train. Approaching from the other direction on parallel tracks is another train: on top of one of the boxcars a lone figure stands with his golf club extended. As the two trains pass each other he swings the club, hits the ball, then raises

**David Weddle, biographer and writer, remembers working with the marvellous Marty Feldman in Hollywood on a never-made film script on the life of their mutual hero Buster Keaton**

his hand to shield his eyes from the sun as he follows its trajectory.

The last gesture shot through me like a thunderbolt. It was Keaton's signature: he used it in almost every one of his movies. This pop-eyed Englishman understood. He was chasing the same dream. "What's his name?" I asked my dad.

"Marty Feldman. Isn't he a riot?"

Years later I would discover that Feldman kept a portrait of Keaton in his dressing room, no matter where in the world he happened to be performing, and that he watched at least one Keaton film a day. "Just to remind me of my roots," he would later explain. "Marty was obsessed with Keaton, most definitely," says his wife Lauretta.

I watched his show, *The Comedy Machine*, every week after that. It served as the summer replacement for *The Dean Martin Show*. It was Feldman's third television series, preceded by *At Last the 1948 Show* (1967) and *It's Marty* (1968). All of the series featured silent-movie segments. Like the great pantomime clowns of the 20s, Feldman demonstrated a remarkable facility for taking a simple situation or gag and extending it with variation after variation.

There were also dialogue sketches and satires in the absurdist tradition of *The Goon Show*. Feldman was in fact an important transitional figure in the progression of British comedy from the Goons to Monty Python. Goon Show veterans Spike Milligan and director Denis Main Wilson worked on the Feldman shows, as did future Pythonites John Cleese, Graham Chapman, Michael Palin, Terry Jones and Terry Gilliam, who created the show's animated opening titles.

The shows sent my young mind spinning off on some Walter Mitty fantasies of my own. If only Marty Feldman would come to Hollywood to make feature films, I could go to work for him, become his gag man. Marty and me, sitting around the gag room, tossing out hairbrained ideas. The fantasies became so palpable I began to believe they were pre-ordained.

In 1974 Marty Feldman came to Hollywood to play Igor in Mel Brooks' hit *Young Frankenstein*. He followed it with supporting roles in Gene Wilder's *The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes' Smarter Brother* (1975) and Brooks' *Silent Movie* (1976). He had become an international star, and Universal Pictures offered him a deal to write and direct his own feature film. It was a fantastic opportunity, a ticket to the big time.

Feldman knew that working for a major Hollywood studio was a treacherous proposition, as he was intimately familiar with how MGM had stripped Buster Keaton of his creative autonomy and left him a broken man. But if Marty could deliver a hit, Universal might give him more creative control over the next movie, and he desperately wanted to make his own features.

Universal wanted another Mel Brooks spoof. So Marty wrote, directed and starred in *The Last Remake of Beau Geste* (1977). "I wrote it to order," he later told journalist Richard Kleiner. "And I wasn't very comfortable doing that." He was even less comfortable when the executives in Universal's

Black Tower dictated who he could cast in the movie, and how scenes should be rewritten and shot. *Beau Geste* was taken away from Feldman in post production and re-edited before he could deliver his first cut – a direct violation of the DGA basic agreement. "I just hated the film," Feldman told Kleiner.

It was, perhaps, an overstatement. The first half of *Beau Geste* was a sharp and often hilarious satire of British and French imperialism, and there were flashes of the brilliance that had permeated his television shows. In one sequence Feldman stumbles across the scalding white sand dunes of the Sahara, hallucinating in the shimmering heat. The world turns black and white and he finds himself in the middle of the 1939 version of *Beau Geste*, where he sits down to share a joint with Gary Cooper. This stunning effect was achieved by shooting new black and white footage of Marty and marrying it optically with the old shots of Cooper. A few years later, Carl Reiner and Steve Martin would build an entire feature, *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid* (1981), around this technique, and it was elaborated upon again in *Zelig* (1983) and *Forrest Gump* (1994).

*Beau Geste* turned a healthy profit, so Universal offered Feldman a deal for another feature. He took it, believing that this time around the studio would grant him more freedom. That would turn out to be a drastic miscalculation, though he didn't yet know that when I snuck onto the Universal lot to meet him in the summer of 1978.

I was a recent graduate of USC film school, and had spent the last year writing a screenplay. It was about Keaton, of course. My script had plenty of elaborate silent movie sequences, but it was essentially a drama that, like Blesh's biography, explored the connections between Buster's art and his private life as both began to disintegrate.

It was easy to get onto the lot. All I did was pull up to the gate and tell the guard, "I have a delivery for Marty Feldman."

"What company are you with?"

"Dino De Laurentiis." It was true, I'd recently landed a job in the mailroom there, and was squeezing this stop in among my many other drops to various studios around town. Walking up the front path with the screenplay in a damp hand, my pulse hammered. A small polished brass name plate adorned the front door: "Marty Feldman". *This is it! Christ!*

I pulled the latch down and entered. A middle-aged blonde secretary looked up from her desk. "Uh, is Mr Feldman in?" She didn't shout, but instead smiled warmly and informed me that he was out.

What I said next is a blur. I blabbered on about who I was and the fact that I had a screenplay that I wanted him to read, painfully conscious of the clumsiness of my voice. But the secretary continued to smile, and nodded, and finally said, "Well, he won't be in today, but I can tell him that you stopped by." She explained that she was only a temporary secretary, assigned to him just a few days ago, and that she had no idea if Feldman would be willing to read an unsolicited screenplay. "But I'll be happy to ask him for you and see what he says."





When I called back the next day, the secretary said, "Oh yes, I told him about you. He said he doesn't have time right now to read any scripts, but that he'd be glad to talk to you if you called back when he was in."

"OK, that'd be great," I said.

"He's in right now. Shall I put him on?"

"Uh, sure, yes, please."

"Hold on."

I felt like someone was smashing my head with a ball-peen hammer. Would he really come on the line any second, would I really find myself - ?

The line clicked. "Hello," a voice purred with an English accent.

"Ah, hello," I blurted, "Mr Feldman?"

"Call me Marty."

"My name is David Weddle and I've always admired your work - " and on I went in a high and stammering voice, explaining how I'd first seen him on television, that I was a graduate of USC film school, and that I had a script about Keaton that I wanted him to read.

"Well, I'm getting ready to shoot another film. I don't have time to read anything right now. Besides, you know, they already made a movie about Keaton, with Donald O'Connor. Did you ever see it?"

A probe. I knew it and responded quickly. "Yes, but it was terrible, a complete white-wash, it had almost nothing to do with Keaton's real life."

"There was another film that Carl Reiner made," he probed again, "*The Comic*, starring Dick Van Dyke. It was a fictionalisation of Keaton's life."

"Yes, the last 45 minutes, which focus on him as an old man making television commercials, are excellent, but the first two thirds of the movie is pretty weak. My script

focuses on Keaton's years at MGM, when it all started to fall apart."

"That's an interesting angle," he said, sounding intrigued now. I spied off the plot in a breathless rush. He interrupted me here and there with pointed questions. "Is there an Arbuckle character? Do you deal with his relationship with his wife?" After listening to my answers, he finally said, "OK, why don't you send me a copy. I'll try to read it in my spare time."

I was doing chin-ups in my apartment a week later when he called. "I've always wanted to make a movie about a silent comedian," he chuckled softly, "and now you've gone and done it. There are just a few rough passages that need to be worked on. I wonder if you might stop by the office sometime this week to talk about them."

"Sure! You bet!"

That was how it began. Feldman might have thought my script was good but that didn't mean it couldn't be improved. He guided me through another five drafts; by the time I finished rewriting it, there was hardly a scene left from the original version.

During this period he made *In God We Trust* (1980) and the unpleasant discovery that the success of *Beau Geste* had won him nothing. To be fair, its faults did not lie entirely with Universal. Feldman's satire of American's televangelists suffered from a contrived plot and underdeveloped characters. It opened to poor reviews and weak business, and Universal informed Feldman that they would need the bungalow back. He moved into a little office just off Hollywood Boulevard, and our script sessions continued. He tried to secure financing for our script, *The Final Chase*, but found no takers. Marty had played dramatic parts in the

**Hollywood bound:**  
**Marty Feldman in**  
**'Young Frankenstein'**

past, for the BBC. But by now most producers thought of him as a Mel Brooks comedian. They weren't about to give him several million dollars to make a surreal tragedy about a silent movie star. "You know, David," Marty said sadly one day, "if I was Dustin Hoffman, I could get this movie made tomorrow."

I knew he had to be disappointed with the turn his career had taken, but we never spoke about it; I didn't know how to broach such a painful subject. In the interview with Richard Kleiner, Marty named Keaton, Laurel and Hardy and Harry Langdon as his idols, then admitted, "I've had to accept the fact that I will never be as good as those people have been. That's been the hardest pill to swallow - that I'll never be in the same league as those I admire... You say, 'Well, all I have is me, and I have to do the best I can with that.'"

He knew his television work had some value, however. For in an interview shortly afterwards on Los Angeles radio, he was asked what he would most like to be remembered for. "*The Loneliness of a Long Distance Golfer*," he replied. "If I'm remembered for anything, I hope it's for that."

In September of 1982 Marty left for Mexico and a supporting role in *Yellowbeard*, co-scripted by Graham Chapman. In December, just before *Yellowbeard* finished principal photography, he was struck down by a massive heart attack. My sister called me with the news, she'd heard it on the radio. Lauretta buried him in Forest Lawn, just a stone's throw away from the graves of Buster Keaton and Stan Laurel. I couldn't face the funeral, but I went a day later and stood over the heap of flowers, sobbing. Crying for myself as much as him.



# REVIEWS

Reviews,  
synopses and  
full credits for  
all the month's  
new films

## Angels

USA 1995

Director: William Dear

### Certificate

U

### Distributor

Buena Vista  
Production Company

Walt Disney

In association with

Caravan Pictures

### Executive Producer

Gary Stutman

### Producers

Irby Smith

Joe Roth

Roger Birnbaum

Head of Production

Caravan Pictures:

Ned Dowd

Associate Producers

Holly Goldberg Sloan

Richard H. Prince

Production Associate

Aida Gaboyan

Stephen Mape

Production Co-ordinators

Lark W. Bernini

2nd Unit:

Alonzo Ruvalcaba

Aaron Dem

Production Manager

Richard H. Prince

Location Manager

Veronique Vowell

Post-production Manager

Rebekah Rudd

2nd Unit Director

Irby Smith

Assistant Directors

L. Dean Jones Jnr

Jay Smith

2nd Unit:

Robert J. Mooney

Sazzy Calhoun

Shannon Wilson

Casting

Pam Dixon Mickelson

Associate:

Amy E. Gerber

ADR Voice:

Barbara Harris

Screenplay

Dorothy Kingsley

George Wells

Holly Goldberg Sloan

Based on the film *Angels*

in the *Outfield* (1951)

Script Supervisor

Joanie Blum

Director of Photography

Matthew F. Leonetti

2nd Unit Director

of Photography

Robert LaBonge

Camera Operators

Robert LaBonge

David E. Diano

2nd Unit:

Tom Connole

Horace Jordan

Steadicam Operators

Gregory Lundsgaard

Peter Jensen

Visual Effects Supervisor

Giedra Rackauskas

Visual Effects Consultant

Robert Dyke

Visual Effects

Supervisor:

Andrew Adamson

Producer:

Jennifer Bell

Art Director:

Carlos Arguello

Technical Supervisor:

Ken Bielenberg

Character Technical

Supervisor:

Dick Walsh

Opticals

Buena Vista Imaging

Digital Optical Supervisor

Les Dittert

Animation

Steve Braggs

George Bruder

Mike Coltery

Aliza Corson

Jamie Dixon

Terry Emmons

Phillipe Gluckman

Rex Grignon

Roger Guyett

Betsy Asher Hall

Rebecca Marie

Cleveland Mitchell

Michael Necci

Karen Schneider

Amie Slate

Larry Weiss

Character Animator

Glenn McQueen

Animation Editor

Shawn Broes

Motion Supervisor

Raman Hui

Motion Animation Producer

Doug Nichols

Editors

Bruce Green

Film:

Paul Dixon

Production Designer

Dennis Washington

Art Director

Thomas T. Targownik

Set Decorator

John Anderson

Set Dresser

Don Watson

Illustrator

Mike Swift

Special Effects

Co-ordinators

Frank W. Tarantino

Jan H. Aaris

Flying Special Effects

James K. Fredburg

Glenn Thomas

Costume Design

Rosanna Norton

Angel:

Susan Nininger

Costume Supervisor

Darryl M. Athons

Make-up

Scott H. Eddo

Diane Hammond

Hairstylist

Paul Abascal

Title Design

R/Greenberg Associates

West

Susan Bradley

Music

Randy Edelman

Orchestrations

Ralph Ferraro

Music Editor

Joanie Diener

Music Consultant

Elton Ahi

Songs

"It's All Right"

by Curtis Mayfield,

performed by The

Impressions; "Hippy

Hippy Shake" by

Robert L. Romero,

performed by Swinging

Blue Jeans; "Take Me

Out to the Ballgame"

by Jack Norworth,

Albert Von Tilzer

Supervising Sound Editor

John A. Larsen

Dialogue Editors

Ulrika Akander

Susan Dudeck

Gloria D'Alessandro

ADR Editors

Jerelyn J. Harding

Denise Horta

Foley Editors

Mark Pappas

Nancy Richardson

Sound Mixer

Willie Burton

ADR Mixers

Charleen Richards

Jeff Courtie

Foley Mixer

David Jobe

Music Mixer

Dennis Sands

Sound Re-recording Mixers

Steve Maslow

Gregg Landaker

Sound Effects Editors

Andy Kopetsky

Bruce Lacey

Harry B. Miller III

John Edwards-Younger

Gordon Davidson

Foley Artists

Alicia Stevenson

Zane Bruce

Baseball Technical Advisers

Carney Lansford

Mitchell Page

Steve McCatty

Wayne Gross

Stunt Co-ordinator

Rocky Capella

Cast

Danny Glover

George Knox

Brenda Fricker

Maggie Nelson

Tony Danza

Mel Clark

Christopher Lloyd

Al the Angel

Ben Johnson

Hank Murphy

Jay O. Sanders

Ranch Wilder

Joseph Gordon-Levitt

Roger

Milton Davis Jnr

J.P.

Taylor Negron

David Montagne

Tony Longo

Triscuit Messmer

Neal McDonough

Whitt Bass

Stoney Jackson

Ray Mitchell

Adrien Brody

Danny Hemmerling

Tim Conlon

Wally

Matthew McConaughey

Ben Williams

Israel Juarbe

José Martinez

Albert Alexander Garcia

Pablo Garcia

Dermot Mulroney

Roger's Father

Robert Clohessy

Frank Gates

Connie Craig

Carolyn

Jonathan Proby

Miguel

Michael Halton

Hairy Man

Mark Conlon

Photographer

Danny Walcott

Marvin

James C. King

Home Plate Umpire

Tony Reitano

Singing Umpire

Diane Amos

Woman Next to J.P.

Christopher Leon DiBlase

Teenager

Robert Stuart Reed

Guard

Ruth Beckford

Judge

Victoria Skerritt

Social Worker

Devon Dear

National Anthem

Singer

O.B. Babbs

Angels Player (Mapel)

Mitchell Page

Angels Player (Abascal)

Mark Cole

Angels Player (Norton)

Chuck Dorsett

Usher

Carney Lansford

Kesey

Pamela West

Ms Angel

Oliver Dear

Rookie Angel

Lionel Douglass

Brother Angel

Bundy Chanock

Umpire

John Howard Swain

First Base Umpire

Marc Magdaleno

Home Plate Umpire

Ron Roggé

Angels Coach

Steven Meredith

T



*Field of Dreams* when he speaks of the people who will come to the game, "Innocent as children... to sit in their shirt sleeves on a perfect afternoon". It's the perfect backdrop for the titles of this Disney baseball fantasy which chews over the same conflation of baseball, pan-spiritual faith and the afterlife. "Roger," asks J. P. as they cycle past the stadium, "Do you believe in heaven?" You could cut seamlessly to the long-dead John Kinsella cosmically reunited with his son for a final, reconciling game of catch, answering, "It's the place dreams come true."

In this remake of Clarence Brown's 1951 film *Angels in the Outfield*, Roger's world is simplified by a basic Manichaean aesthetic. His dissolute biker father is first glimpsed through a haze of cigarette smoke, wearing black leather and a dark spiky goatee. Al the Angel, a gurning, grinning Christopher Lloyd, wears white and beams incessantly, speaking in parental epigrams: "Keep your nose clean and your eyes open!" The California Angels are a goofy cartoon team; the credits list a number of baseball advisers, and we get to see a lot of quirky comic playing both bad and good, but these players are all rubbery gestures and irreverence, cheeks bulging with gum or mouths spitting huge streams of tobacco. The zooming camera exaggerates their appeal as likeable misfits.

Danny Glover's George Knox initially fills the screen in bug-eyed, flush-faced fits of rage; as the angels release his team from defeat, the cartoon angles gradually ease up as well. The 1951 Knox was a tyrant; the put-upon Glover has more dignity, less spurious torment. A running gag has Roger and J.P. surrounded by a widening sea of Angels baseball merchandise. Considering that J.P. is played by seven-year-old Milton Davis Jr., who achieved international fame telling basketball superstar Shaquille O'Neal not to even think about stealing his cola, the film seems sure of its critique of the commodification of sport. But when the sell-out crowd pours into the stadium for the payoff game wearing wings and silver halos that light up and spin, the film loses sight of its own marketing.

Once the heavenly angels arrive, there's never much doubt that the last-place Angels will soon rise up the league. But the faith required to see these desperate losers succeed remains a convenient, all-inclusive humanitarianism. Baseball movies have developed their own mystic tradition which, however non-denominational, offers miracles to winners and little solace to losers. When Roger addresses his prayer to a God who could be male or female, concluding "Amen, a woman, too" he is thus applying the same baggy faith the aggressive, hard Knox professes at the press conference: "I do believe there are times in life when something stronger, higher or maybe spiritual is with you." Stronger, higher, and able to splinter a baseball bat to smithereens when smashing a home run for the chosen few.

Amy Friedman

## Arizona Dream

USA/France 1991

Director: Emir Kusturica

**Certificate**  
15

**Distributor**  
Electric Pictures  
**Production Company**  
Constellation  
UGC  
Hachette Premiere  
With participation of  
Ministère de la Culture  
et de la Communica-  
tion (Centre National  
de la Cinématographie)  
**Executive Producer**  
Paul R. Gurian

**Producers**  
Claudie Ossard  
Yves Marmion  
**Co-producer**  
Richard Brick  
**Production Co-ordinators**  
Annie Saunders  
New York:  
Michael Boonstra  
**Production Manager**  
Jay Sedrish  
**Unit Managers**  
Alaska/Colorado:  
Buddy Enright  
New York:  
Charles Darby  
**Location Managers**  
Alaska/Colorado:  
Raine Hall  
New York:  
Richard Brick  
**Post-production Manager**  
Stevlana Novak  
**Post-production**  
**Co-ordinator**  
Antoine Grujard  
**Assistant Directors**  
Sergio Mimica  
K.C. Hadenfield  
Otie Brown  
Paolo Morante  
Alaska/Colorado Unit:  
Marco Ray  
Reonne Haslett  
**Casting**  
Pennie Du Pont  
**Screenplay**  
David Atkins  
**Script Supervisor**  
Lynn Harris  
Alaska/Colorado:  
Jane Goldsmith  
**Director of Photography**  
Vilko Filac

**Additional Camera**  
Elisabeth Dougherty  
Spencer McDonald  
**Camera Operator**  
Alaska/Colorado:  
Mitch Amundson  
**Steadicam Operators**  
Mark Emery Moore  
New York:  
Bob Gorelick  
Jim McConkey  
**Special Visual Effects**  
Peerless Camera  
Company Ltd  
**Editor**  
Andrija Zafranovic  
**Production Designer**  
Miljen Kljakovic  
**Art Director**  
Jan Pascale  
**Set Decorators**  
Jan Pascale  
New York:  
Elaine O'Donnell  
**Set Dressers**  
Erik Polczwartek  
Christie Addis  
Francine Byrne  
Heidi Baumgarten  
Alaska/Colorado:  
Deborah Finn  
New York:  
Thomas Conway  
**Draughtswoman**  
Kelly Safritz-Jones  
**Special Effects**  
**Co-ordinators**  
Gregory C. Landerer  
Kenny Estes

**Costume Design**  
Jill M. Ohannesson  
**Costume Supervisor**  
Meg Goodwin  
**Make-up**  
Patti York  
Charles Balazs  
Cheryl Voss  
**Hairstylists**  
Deborah Ann Piper  
Charles Balazs  
Cheryl Voss  
**Music**  
Goran Bregovic  
**Music Consultant**  
Reme Taquet  
**Songs/Music Extracts**  
"In The Death Car"  
by Iggy Pop, Goran  
Bregovic; "Dreams"  
"Old Home Movie"  
"Gypsy Reggae"  
"Death" by Goran  
Bregovic; "TV screen"  
by Iggy Pop, Goran  
Bregovic, performed by  
Iggy Pop; "7/8 & 11/8"  
by Goran Bregovic; "Get  
The Money" by Iggy  
Pop, Goran Bregovic,  
performed by Goran  
Bregovic; Nova Mia" by  
Jose Antonio Mendez;  
"Se Me Hizo Facil"  
by Augustin Lara;  
"Topsy" by Durham,  
"Minor Swing" by  
Django Reinhardt,  
Stéphane Grappelli,  
"You Are Driving  
Me Crazy" by Walter  
Donaldson, performed  
by Django Reinhardt;  
"Doll on a Music Box"  
by Richard Sherman,  
Robert Sherman;  
"Atotonilco" by Juan  
Jose Epinoza Guevara;  
"Yo No Me Case Con  
Padre" by Sebastian  
Curiel Cueto; "Besa Me  
Mucho" by Sunny  
Skylar, Consuelo  
Velaquez; "El  
Sinoalense" by  
Severiano Brisenio;  
"That Old Black Magic"  
by Johnny Mercer,  
Harold Arlen; "Carnival  
in Venice"; "Snake  
Charmers"; "Las  
Mananitas"  
**Sound Editor**  
Gerard Hardy  
**Foley Editor**  
Mireille Leroy  
**Sound Mixer**  
Jim Stuebe  
**Re-recording Mixer**  
Vincent Arnadi  
**Sound Effects**  
Vincent Guillon  
**Foley Artist**  
Jean-Pierre Lelong  
**Post-sync Recording**  
Jack Jullian Gauffries  
Jean-François Auger  
**Stunt Co-ordinator**  
Everett L. Creach  
**Stunt Pilot**  
Lyle Byrum  
**Animal Trainer**  
Boone Narr  
**Dog Sled Trainer**  
Jerry MacFachen  
Marion Winkler  
**Film Extracts**  
North By Northwest 1959  
The Godfather Part II 1974  
The Wizard of Oz 1939  
Raging Bull 1980

**Cast**  
Johnny Depp  
Axel Backmar  
Jerry Lewis  
Leo Sweetie  
Faye Dunaway  
Elaine  
Lili Taylor  
Grace  
Paulina Porizkova  
Millie  
Vincent Gallo  
Paul Backmar  
Candace Mason  
Blanche  
Alexia Rane  
Angie  
Polly Noonan  
Betty  
Ann Schulman  
Carla  
Michael J. Pollard  
Fabian  
Patricia O'Grady  
MC/Announcer  
James R. Wilson  
Lawyer  
Eric Polczwartek  
Man With Door  
Kim Keo  
Mechanical Doll  
Sal Jenco  
Man at the Phone

James P. Marshall  
Boatman  
Vincent Tocktuo  
Eskimo Man  
Santos Romero  
David Rodriguez  
Juan Urrea  
José Luis Avila  
Sergio Harmendaris  
Frank Turley  
Manuel Rodriguez  
Cayetano Acosta  
Manuel Ruiz  
Narciso Dominguez  
Benjamin S. Gonzales  
Serafino Flores  
Miguel Moreno  
Raphael Salcido  
Chanaia Rodriguez  
Mariachi Band  
Members  
Newman  
Alaskan Dog  
Sammy  
Theatre Dog

12,647 feet  
141 minutes

Dolby stereo  
In colour

Returning home to his igloo after a sleigh accident, an Eskimo blows up a fish's stomach like a balloon and gives it to his young son to play with. The balloon floats across the atmosphere, eventually bursting in New York, next to Axel Backmar, who is asleep on the back of a fish truck. Axel works for the New York Department of Fish and Game, counting fish. His cousin Paul, a struggling actor, arrives in town and cajoles him into going to Arizona for his uncle Leo's wedding. Leo, a Cadillac salesman, feels responsible for Axel; he was driving in the crash which killed Axel's parents. Now he wants to help the young man by taking him on in the family firm.

One afternoon, Elaine, a glamorous, middle-aged woman, and her stepdaughter Grace, pay a visit to the car showroom. Axel takes a shine to Elaine. A few days later, he and Paul are invited to her place in the country for dinner. Elaine shot her husband, a tin magnate, a few years before, and Grace has never forgiven her. Mother and stepdaughter bicker throughout the meal, even as Paul caresses Elaine's legs under the table. Grace finally leaves the dinner party and makes an unsuccessful suicide attempt.

Elaine and Axel become lovers. She tells him she always wanted to fly. He resolves to stay with her and help her build an aeroplane. At first, none of the machines can get off the ground, and Grace keeps destroying the equipment. Leo and Paul disapprove of the affair, and try to prise Axel away from Elaine; she scares them off with a gun. Relations between Grace and Elaine continue to deteriorate. Axel decides that he must kill one or other of them to save both from misery. With this in mind, he breaks into Grace's room. When his nerve fails, she grabs the pistol and invites him to play Russian

roulette; both survive the ordeal.

At a local talent night, Paul startles the locals with an interpretation of the crop-dusting sequence in *North By Northwest*. Halfway through the evening, Axel hears that Leo has taken some pills and collapsed. On the way to hospital, Leo dies. After making the funeral arrangements, Axel returns to the homestead. He and Elaine have a bitter argument, but are eventually reconciled. They plan to go to Alaska, but Elaine can't decide whether she wants to take the train or fly. Paul, Grace and Axel celebrate Elaine's birthday with a lavish party. Presented with a brand new plane, she gleefully jumps in and takes off. Watching her from the roof of the house, Axel and Grace share an illicit kiss. That evening, the four play blind man's buff in the rain, and Grace releases her pet turtles. She and Axel conspire to elope together. In the night, Grace heads out into the storm and shoots herself. Axel returns to town alone, and falls asleep in Leo's derelict showroom. He dreams he is in Alaska with his uncle; the two catch a fish with eyes on both sides of the head, a good omen. The fish flies away into the distance.

A testament to its European director's bewildered fascination with the vast open spaces, small towns and seething cities of modern-day America, *Arizona Dream* occupies familiar iconographic territory. Cadillacs abound, there are frequent references to old Hollywood movies, the picture even has its own crop of bona fide stars, all of them playing recognisable variations on their usual roles. Johnny Depp is the visionary delinquent who refuses to accept the strictures of the adult world. Faye Dunaway, in best *Mommie Dearest* mode, is the imperious but vulnerable older woman he falls in love with. And, perhaps most provocatively, Jerry Lewis, as Uncle Leo, combines elements of his old comic persona with a touching portrayal of middle-American man-in-crisis. Like John Updike's Harry Angstrom in the novel *Rabbit At Rest*, Leo is an elderly car dealer whose physical decline is mirrored by that of the industry he works in.

Kusturica was presented with the script by one of his students at Columbia University. There is nothing par-



Look, no hands: Faye Dunaway, Johnny Depp



◀ ticularly new in the themes it broaches, and it comes as no surprise to discover the original title was *American Dreamers*. However, in the Serb director's hands, the material undergoes a startling metamorphosis, taking on the opaque, dreamlike quality of an old European fable. He manages to defamiliarise even the most humdrum aspects of American life. Conventional symbols, automobiles, guns and the like, are juxtaposed with flying fish and baby turtles. Even capitalism is made poetic: Leo doesn't merely want to make money - his ambition is to stack Cadillac "high as the moon".

The opening sequences, in the frozen limits of Alaska, are reminiscent of *Nanook of the North*, but from here we float into contemporary New York, before heading out to the rugged West. We seem to slip across epochs. Leo's car lot looks like a relic from the 1950s. Elaine's homestead has all the trimmings of a nineteenth-century country house, and Faye Dunaway dresses as if she is playing Hedda Gabler. At certain points, characters levitate for no very discernible reason. The film is by turns infuriating and inspiring: it has a random, haphazard quality utterly at odds with most American cinema.

Apparently, Kusturica experienced all sorts of spats with the French financiers. When they complained about the form it was taking, he simply walked off the set and refused to come back until they allowed him to do things in his own wilful perverse way. The version which is finally reaching Britain looks as if it may well have been tampered with (Iggy Pop is mentioned in the press release cast list as 'Man with Pumpkin', but doesn't seem to put in an appearance). Yet *Arizona Dream* remains overlong, and often meanders purposelessly. Chunks of *Raging Bull*, *North by Northwest* and *The Godfather Part II* are quoted at various key points in the story. Vincent Gallo watches them, speaks along with the characters as if he is uttering a sacred catechism, and offers a splendid imitation of Cary Grant running away from the crop-dusting plane, but these sequences only serve to highlight how lacking in suspense, narrative momentum and meaningful dialogue *Arizona Dream* itself is. Still, its vices are its virtues: the film isn't straitjacketed by genre or convention, and can amble off in whichever direction it pleases.

Like Depp and Dunaway, who spend much of their time attempting to build primitive aeroplanes in the backyard, Kusturica feels free to experiment. If some of his gambits don't come off, he needn't worry: he knows he'll be airborne soon. For audiences, too, this work-in-process ought ultimately to prove rewarding, even if it is full of hideously improvised scenes, where he simply seems to have turned the camera on and left the actors to their own devices. *Arizona Dream*'s many moments of outrageous virtuosity more than compensate. It is as bizarre and original a film as any European has ever made about America.

**Geoffrey Macnab**

## Bad Boys

USA 1995

Director: Michael Bay

### Certificate

18

### Distributor

Columbia TriStar  
Columbia Pictures  
Executive Producers

Bruce S. Pustlin  
Lucas Foster

### Producers

Don Simpson  
Jerry Bruckheimer  
Production Co-ordinator

Lois Walker

### Unit Production Manager

Christopher Cronyn

### Location Manager

Samuel P. Tedesco

### 2nd Unit Director

Ken Bates

### Assistant Directors

Bruce G. Moriarty  
Jonathan M. Watson  
Jeffrey T. Barabe

### 2nd Unit

Barry Waldman  
Lisandra Soto

### Casting

Francine Maisler  
Lynn Kressel  
Florida:  
Ellen Jacoby Casting  
International

### Screenplay

Michael Barrie  
Jim Mulholland  
Doug Richardson

### Story

George Gallo

### Script Supervisor

Corey B. Yugler

### Director of Photography

Howard Atherton

### 2nd Unit Director of Photography

Peter Lyons Collister

### Camera Operators

Doug O'Neons  
Craig Haagenzen

### Film Editor

Christian Wagner

### Production Designer

John Vallone

### Art Director

Peter Politanoff

### Set Decorator

Kate Sullivan

### Set Dresser

Mark Dane

### Special Effects Co-ordinator

Richard Lee Jones

### Special Effects

Foreman:

Mark Banich

### Pyrotechnics

Mike Meinardus

### Costume Design

Bobbie Read

### Wardrobe Supervisors

Robert Mata  
Kristy Aitken  
Hernandez

### Make-up

Jeni Lee Dinkel  
Laini Thompson

### Hair stylist

Caridad Collazo

### Opticals

Cinema Research  
Corporation

### Music

Mark Mancina

### Additional:

Nick Glennie-Smith  
Christopher Ward

### Orchestrations

Bruce Fowler

### Music Supervisors

Michael Dilbeck  
Happy Walters

### Music Editor

Curtis Roush

### Music Consultant

Jeffrey Pollack

### Songs/Music Extracts

"Boom Boom Boom"

by Dillinger, Juvenile,  
performed by Juster;

"I've Got A Little Something For You" by Mark Taylor, Denis Ingoldsby, performed by MN8; "Shy Guy" by Diana King, Andy Marvel, Kingsley Gardner, performed by Diana King; "Bad Boys" by Ian Lewis, performed by Inner Circle; "Work Me Slow" by Daryl Simmons, performed by XSCAPE; "Call The Police (Marvel/Bonzai Mix)" by and performed by Ini Kamoze, Spida, Justice; "Someone To Love" by Babyface, performed by Jon B. featuring Babyface; "Me Against The World" featuring "Dramacydal" by Tupac Shakur, Burt Bacharach, Hal David, Minnie Riperton, Richard Rudolph, Leonard Ware, performed by 2PAC, Puff Johnson; "Never Find Someone Like You" by Marti Sharron, Danny Sembello, performed by Keith Martin; "Juke-Joint Jezebel" by En Esch, Sascha Konietzko, Günter Schulz, Raymond Watts, performed by KMFDM; "Angels" by Sean Carlin, Rob Lightbody, performed by Dink; "Nothing" by Christopher Hall, Stuart Zechman, performed by Stabbing Westward; "So Many Ways (Bad Boys Version)" by and performed by Warren G; "Sweet Little Lass" by John Custer, performed by DAG; "Five O, Five O (Here They Come)" by Da S.W.A.T. Team, performed by 69 Boyz featuring K-Notch; "Da B Side" by Da Brat, The Notorious B.I.G. aka 'Biggie Smalls', Jermaine Dupri, Raymond Calhoun, performed by Da Brat featuring The Notorious B.I.G.; "Bad Boys Reply ('95)" by Ian Lewis, performed by Inner circle featuring TEK  
Supervising Sound Editor Robert Henderson  
Sound Editors David M. Horton Greg Dillon Samuel C. Crutcher Marshall Winn Virginia Cook McGowan Adam Johnston  
Supervising ADR Editor James Simcik  
ADR Editor Bill Carruth  
Supervising Foley Editor David L. Horton  
Foley Editors Willie Allen David Williams  
Production Mixer Peter J. Devlin  
Foley Mixers Nerses Gezalayan Jim Ashwill

**Music Score Mixer**  
Alan Meyerson  
**Sound Re-recording Mixers**  
Kevin O'Connell  
Rick Kline  
Gregory H. Watkins  
**Foley Walkers**  
Dan O'Connell  
Gary Hecker  
**Technical Adviser**  
Major Nelson Oramas  
**Stunt Co-ordinator**  
Ken Bates  
**Animal Wranglers**  
Trademark Animal Talent

### Cast

**Martin Lawrence**  
Marcus Burnett  
**Will Smith**  
Mike Lowrey  
**Téa Leoni**  
Julie Mott  
**Tcheiky Karyo**  
Fouchet  
**Theresa Randle**  
Theresa Burnett  
**Marg Helgenberger**  
Alison Sinclair  
**Nestor Serrano**  
Detective Sanchez  
**Julio Oscar Mechoso**  
Detective Ruiz  
**Saverio Guerra**  
Chet The Doorman  
**Anna Thomson**  
Francine  
**Kevin Corrigan**  
Elliot  
**Michael Imperioli**  
Jojo  
**Joe Pantoliano**  
Captain Howard  
**Lisa Boyle**  
Girl Decoy  
**Michael Taliferro**  
Carjacker  
**Emmanuel Xuereb**  
Eddie Dominguez  
**Marc Macaulay**  
Noah Trafficante  
**Ralph Gonzalez**  
Kuni  
**Vic Manni**  
Ferguson

**Frank John Hughes**  
Casper  
**Mike Kirton**  
Andy  
**Will Knickerbocker**  
Officer Bill O'Fee  
**Tiffany Samuels**  
Megan Burnett  
**Cory Hodges**  
James Burnett  
**Scott Cumberbatch**  
Quincy Burnett  
**Joey Romano**  
Sam Ayers  
**Detectives**  
**Karen Alexander**  
Max Logan  
**Fawn Reed**  
Woman at Boxing Gym  
**Heather Davis**  
Lois Fields  
**Maureen Gallagher**  
Yvette  
**Juan Cejas**  
Ether Van Driver  
**Ed Amatrudo**  
Ether Van Boss  
**Jimmy Franco**  
Club Bartender  
**Tony Bolano**  
Drunk Guy at Urinal  
**Sham Toub**  
Store Clerk  
**Marty McSorley**  
Norman Max Maxwell  
**Henchmen**  
**Buddy Bolton**  
Wally  
**Stan Miller**  
News Anchor  
**Dug Jones**  
Man  
**John Spider Salley**  
Hacker 'Fletcher'  
**Dana Mark**  
Police Technician  
**Mario Ernesto Sanchez**  
Drug Buyer

10,689 feet

118 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

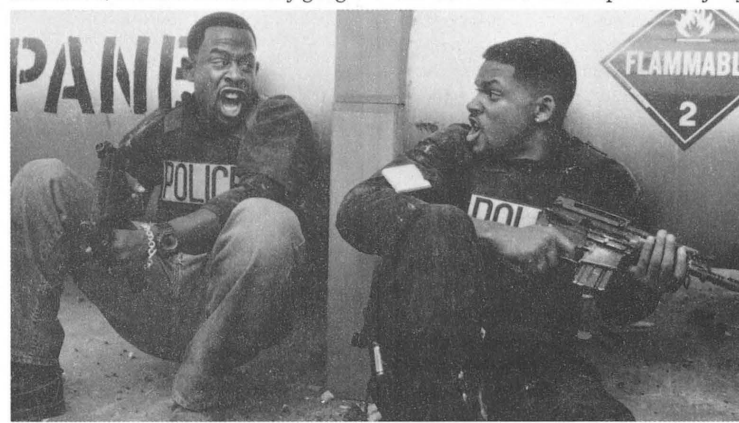
led by the crazed Fouchet - shoot Eddie and Max. Julie escapes via the roof.

Wanting revenge, Mike goes to find Lois, but she's already dead. Meanwhile Marcus is trying to access Dominguez's old cop file on the computer. His boss Captain Howard gets a call from Julie, saying she will only talk to Mike. At Howard's insistence, Marcus pretends to be Mike. He goes to Julie's apartment but she is suspicious. Only when Fouchet's hoods arrive does she agree to go along, taking her two dogs with her. As 'Mike', Marcus brings her to Mike's apartment.

That night Marcus's wife Theresa kicks him out of their bedroom, but Howard orders Marcus to continue the deception. After Julie identifies Fouchet's henchman Noah from mugshots, Marcus and Mike visit Noah's favourite haunt, Club Hell. Julie follows, armed with one of Mike's guns, and tries to shoot Fouchet but misses. Mike, Marcus and Julie then make their getaway in a truck full of ether. Noah pursues them onto a road under repair where Mike unloads the barrels of ether and sets them aflame, killing Noah. A helicopter television news crew films the result.

Two of Fouchet's men are arrested outside Marcus' home and give up Fouchet's name. Mike, Marcus and Julie are spotted watching Fouchet's boat, and are followed back to Mike's apartment building. During a gun battle in the lobby, the gang kidnap Julie. Marcus persuades a computer hacker felon to access Dominguez's file and the cops discover that their receptionist is his former lover. She gives Mike a car phone number which they track to an airport hangar where a major drug deal is about to occur. Mike, Marcus and two Latino colleagues attack the heavily protected site, rescuing Julie, blowing up the drugs, a huge cash payoff and a private jet before pursuing Fouchet to his doom in a final car chase across the airfield.

Those who regard a director's credit as the most crucial piece of information about a film will be interested to know that the promotional credits sheet for *Bad Boys* contains no reference to the director at all. He is credited on the film print itself, fleetingly, but even there the actual authorship of *Bad Boys* is clearly denied him. For this is a Don Simpson and Jerry



Screaming targets: Martin Lawrence, Will Smith



Bruckheimer film, branded by the production duo who defined a certain kind of 80s action movie with *Top Gun* and *Beverly Hills Cop*, as well as a particular image of the bodybuilt, Tao-reading Hollywood production exec who was perpetually 'ready to go'.

That might be the first question that an audience asks of an action movie: is it ready to go? The immediate answer for *Bad Boys* is undoubtedly yes. All of the gunfights, car chases and explosions that one would expect are there, unobtrusively directed by Michael Bay in the requisite rock-video style and edited as much for punch and easy laughs as ever. They were also there when the duo came a cropper with the hugely expensive car racing flop *Days of Thunder*. *Bad Boys* is more like *Beverly Hills Cop*, and so it relies for its main strength on the ideological double-whammy of slick African-American humour and a near-fetishistic reverence for destructive mayhem, as if the two go naturally together.

The plot simply requires us to dip into the lifestyles on view and to enjoy the almost Shakespearean cuckoldry humour while waiting for the next burst of gunfire. Both the action heroics and the sexual banter are well managed by Will Smith (of *Fresh Prince of Bel Air* fame) and Martin Lawrence (star of the spoof US talkshow *Martin* and host of *Russell Simmons' Def Comedy Jam*). They work in a similar but sufficiently different vein to that of the *Lethal Weapon* pairing Mel Gibson and Danny Glover but in a more subtle key than Eddie Murphy's. The obvious contrast between Smith's character, Mike Lowrey, a smoothie with a private income and a beautiful apartment, and Lawrence's character Marcus, a working-class married man with a suspicious wife, is nicely shaded by their role-reversal when Marcus has to pretend to be Mike. Obsessed as it is with male sexual performance, their patter is often edgy and tense. Some of this tension cannot resolve itself because the affect-free white girl Julie Mott who comes between them isn't allowed to have a meaningful or physical relationship with either of them. She is the object of frustration for both of them, yet she remains somehow unattainable. Clearly, American mainstream action movies are still not ready to go on miscegenation any more than they were in the days of *Beverly Hills Cop*.

On the other hand the vigilante cop ethics required of the Hollywood action hero might nowadays be more palatably expressed by black characters than white as there's not much chance of these cops moonlighting with the militia. It is also refreshing that the villain is French rather than English with Tcheky Karyo reprising his more psychotic moments from *Nikita*. Otherwise *Bad Boys* is as nasty, thrilling, sexist, sexy, dumb, sharp and reprehensible as you want it to be - any number of qualifying adjectives will do because the experience it provides is so infuriatingly, enjoyably and successfully all-encompassing an entertainment.

Nick James

## Beyond Rangoon

USA 1995

Director: John Boorman

### Certificate

12  
Distributor Rank

### Production Company

Castle Rock  
Entertainment presents  
A Pleskow/Spikings production

### Executive Producer

Sean Ryerson

### Producers

Barry Spikings

Eric Pleskow

John Boorman

Co-producers

Alex Lasker

Bill Rubenstein

Associate Producers

Mark Egerton

Walter Donohue

Production Supervisor

Chandran Rutnam

Production Co-ordinators

Betsy Filwood

Debra James

Unit Production Manager

Asoka Perera

Location Manager

Subramanian Mani

Local Production

Co-ordinator

Claudette Almeida

Assistant Directors

Mark Egerton

Phil Patterson

Emma Pounds

Sherard Jayasuriya

Liz Legum

2nd Unit:

Toby Pease

Emma Schofield

Casting

Mary Gail Artz

Barbara Cohen

Screenplay

Alex Lasker

Bill Rubenstein

Script Supervisor

Pat Rambaut

Director of Photography

John Seale

2nd Unit Director

of Photography

David Burr

Camera Operators

John Seale

Brad Shield

Steadicam Operator

Brad Shield

Digital Optical Effects

Craig Zerouni

CFX Associates

Editor

Ron Davis

Production Designer

Anthony Pratt

Art Director

Errol Kelly

Set Decorator

Eddie Fowlie

Braughtsman

Martin Atkinson

Scenic Artist

John Davey

Sculptures

Mansell Rivers-Bland

U.U. Illangakoon

Wimal Jayawardene

Daya Dollapihila

Peter Singho

Special Effects Co-ordinator

John Evans

Special Effects

Phil Stokes

Kevin Draycott

Bob Nugent

Digby Milner

Garth Inns

### Larry Waggoner

Titles

General Screen

Enterprises

Music

Hans Zimmer

Additional Music:

Nick Glennie-Smith

Music Performed by

Pan Pipe

Richard Harvey

Solo Voice:

Carmen Daye

Music Conductor

Nick Glennie-Smith

Orchestrations

Fiachra Trench

Gavin Greenaway

Graham Prescott

Music Producers

Hans Zimmer

Adam Smalley

Music Editor

Adam Smalley

Supervising Sound Editor

Ian Fuller

Dialogue Editors

Pat Brennan

Bob Robinson

ADR Supervisor

Ted Mason

Foley Supervisor

John Ireland

Sound Mixer

Gary Wilkins

Foley Mixer

Mike Dowson

Foley Recordist

Geoff Mist

Music Recordist

Paul Hulme

Sound Re-recording Mixer

John Hayward

Foley Artists

Jenny Lee Wright

Pauline Martin

Special Advisers

Doctor Kyaw Win

Alan Clements

Stunt Co-ordinator

William Ong

Cast

Patricia Arquette

Laura Bowman

U Aung Ko

U Aung Ko

Frances McDormand

Andy

Spalding Gray

Jeremy Watt

Tiara Jacquelina

Desk Clerk

Kuswadinath Bujang

Colonel

Victor Slezak

Mr Scott

Jit Murad

Sein Htoo

Ye Myint

Zaw Win

Cho Cho Myint

Zabai

Johnny Cheah

Min Han

Haji Mohd Rajoli

Karen Father

Azmi Hassan

Older Karen Boy

Almad Fithi

Yonger Karen Boy

Adelle Lutz

Aung San Suu Kyi

Mohd Wan Nazri

Roslee Mansor

Check Point Soldiers

at Train

Zaidi Omar

Check Point Officer

at Train

Michael Pickells

Laura's Husband

Enzo Rossi

Laura's Son

Rudzuwan Hashim

Office Min

Samko

Birdman

### Ramona Sanchez-Waggoner

Woman Tourist

Norlela Ismail

Young Woman (Sula)

Nyak Osman

Village Headman

Yusuf Abdul Hamid

River Trader

Lutang Anyie

Karen Leader

Ali Fiji

Fuel Vendor

Dion Abu Bakar

Rapist

Yeoh Keat Chye

BLK Beret Major

Johari Ismail

BLK Beret Sergeant

Rashidi Mohd

Secret Police Officer

William Saw

Bandana Man

Anna Howard

Australian Doctor

Manisah Mandin

Aung Ko's Daughter

Charley Boorman

Photographer

Hani Mohsin Hanafi

Young Monk/Soldier

Isam Bin

Burmese Official

Jamalahdin Rejab

Aung

Cig Soldiers

### Peter Win

Aung Ko's Helper

John Mindy

Burmese Soldier

U Kyaw Win

Sule Aide/Buddha

Monk

Gael d'Oliviera

French Boy

Pascale d'Oliviera

French Mother

Gilles d'Oliviera

French Father

Asmi Wahab

Sula Commander

Albert Thaw

Sule Officer

Mansell Rivers-Bland

Hotel Guest

Siti Abdullah

Village Woman

Satish Chand Bhandari

Aung Ko's Friend

8,936 feet

99 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

Technicolor

Prints by

Technicolor

Anamorphic



In muddy waters: Patricia Arquette

dents hoping to reach the safety of Thailand. Breaking through a military checkpoint, they head through the jungle on foot and reach the haven of an anti-government guerrilla camp, from which, under heavy shelling from state troops which occasions much loss of life and serious injury, Laura and U Aung both make it over the river into safe territory. Arriving in a refugee camp on the Thai side of the border, Laura immediately pitches in to help the Red Cross medical team.

Burma, August 1988. Traumatized by the death of her husband and infant son in a domestic assault, American doctor Laura Bowman has taken her sister Andy's advice and joined her on a sightseeing tour of South-East Asia. Unable at first to blank out such painful recent events, Laura's curiosity at the demonstration outside her Rangoon hotel room window one night leads her through the city streets to witness pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi fearlessly confronting a phalanx of armed soldiers, part of the ruling military junta's brutal regime of repression. On her return to her hotel however, the discovery of the loss of her passport forces her to stay behind alone in Rangoon to sort out a replacement.

After her initial visit to the US embassy, she's accosted in the street by U Aung Ko, a self-proclaimed 'unofficial' guide. After bribing a checkpoint guard, they're soon driving in the country, where U Aung's car breaks down and they're given shelter by a group of former student activists who reveal that U Aung was dismissed from a university professorship for helping the cause. The next day, news of an army massacre of pro-democracy protesters in Rangoon causes them to leave their cover and head for the Thai border. En route, Laura rescues U Aung from being shot by a suspicious soldier, whereupon the two make off by car with the soldiers giving chase. Eventually they escape via the river, but at the cost of a bad chest wound to U Aung.

Persuading a bamboo-seller to take them down river, Laura obtains medicines during a brief stop, though she has to shoot a soldier to do so. Operating on U Aung on the raft, she saves his life, but he repays the favour by spiriting her away from the Burmese military surrounding the US embassy in Rangoon. While ruthless government troops mow down groups of pro-democracy supporters, Laura and U Aung tag along with a group of stu-

There's a certain industry shorthand that describes as a 'fish out of water' any film that throws its protagonist into unfamiliar territory to dramatic and/or comic effect. It's a narrative form that John Boorman has turned to time and again (in, for example, *Hell in the Pacific*, *Deliverance* and *The Emerald Forest*). The set of tensions between man and nature/Western and wilderness enacted in *Beyond Rangoon* are rich in psychological and eco-political resonance beyond their basic narrative-building potential - the action drama is both an interior journey and a plea for environmental/human rights awareness. At the same time, Boorman, the maker of *Excalibur*, brings a mythological aura to these trials of fortitude, where the test set for the individual exists outside of normal social circumstances and seems designed to test the very fibre of her humanity at some essential level. (In his most recent work, *Hope and Glory* and the ill-received *Where the Heart Is* we find the quotidian domestic world turned upside-down.)

That *Beyond Rangoon* seeks to take all this on board, while adding, for the first time in its director's career, a specific political imperative in its platform for the plight of Burma's pro-democracy movement and its house-bound Nobel Prize-winning leader Aung San Suu Kyi, is certainly evidence of Boorman's ambition. Yet on this occasion, the conventional mechanisms of the film's chase-thriller narrative leave little room to indulge its roster of weighty aspirations, and the result is a sketchy, over-reaching piece that's at its best when delivering basic suspense setpieces. Shooting on location, with Malaysia standing in for Burma, John Seale's camera is all too eager to cut its way through the jungle undergrowth or plunge into the local rivers, matching Patricia Arquette's plucky heroine step for step as her vacationing American doctor finds herself by the side of a former political dissident on the run from the country's ►



◀ trigger-happy military.

Unsurprisingly, from a director who's probed the Amazon basin and crossed the Appalachians in his time, the film's potent sense of place is its strongest suit, although slightly dissipated from time to time by some awkward process work (post-production tinkering or logistical exigencies?). If Patricia Arquette proves herself equal to the physical demands of the role, her success in dealing with Laura Bowman's growing commitment to fight injustice and her concomitant recovery from the traumatic loss of her husband and child in a fatal attack on her home in the US is a good deal more qualified.

In this respect, Alex Lasker and Bill Rubenstein's script doesn't give her much of a chance. It's as if the bathetic lessons of *The Killing Fields* had entirely passed them by. Spalding Gray's casting as the befuddled tour guide here seems no accident, while Hans Zimmer's pan-pipe-heavy score seems a self-conscious steal from Ennio Morricone's work on that other Puttnam/Joffé epic *The Mission*. The use of an ongoing national tragedy in South-East Asia as the backdrop to the personal development of one messed-up Westerner seems counter-productive at best, somewhat dubious at worst, dwarfing the human drama while it trivialises the political one.

Of course, it's difficult to argue against the positive aspects in the film if it brings the courage of Aung San Suu Kyi to a wider audience. However, the film seems simply unable to bridge the chasm between the very real sacrifices made by her and her supporters and the scriptwriters' contrivances that have disposed of the heroine's family and put her through any number of hair-raising scrapes. While the very notion of the troubled Westerner finding spiritual balm in the mystic East comes over as the usual well-meaning cliché, it's equally disappointing that a film which offers such compassion for the Burmese people should treat its Burmese characters (martial automata on the one hand, courageous freedom fighters on the other, and nothing in-between) as ciphers.

With its intermittently nerve-wracking action highlights, including a well-mounted finale in which Patricia Arquette and her pals in the resistance cross the river into safe Thailand under heavy army shelling, *Beyond Rangoon* has the air of Boorman bidding to reach the box office after the dull thud of *Where the Heart Is*. Approached as an empty-headed actioner, it's partially successful, but when so much more has obviously been intended (and achieved in Boorman's previous work) one wonders where this perennial cinematic adventurer has left to go. Boorman is a director to write off at your peril, but now in his sixties his travelling days must surely be numbered and the spectre of Werner Herzog must be there to remind him that the visionary who spends too much time in the wilderness might just leave his career there on a permanent basis.

**Trevor Johnston**

## Cobb

USA 1994

Director: Ron Shelton

### Certificate

18

### Distributor

Warner Bros

### Production Company

Warner Bros

In association with

Regency Enterprises

Alcor Films

### Executive Producer

Arnon Milchan

### Producer

David Lester

### Associate Producer

Tom Todoroff

### Co-associate Producers

Karin Freud

Kellie Davis

### Production Co-ordinators

Nanette Siegert

Tina Bennett

### Unit Production Manager

Pat Kehoe

### Location Managers

L.A./Tahoe:

Kokayi Ampah

Georgia/Alabama:

Stephanie Samuel

### 2nd Unit Directors

Jerry J. Gatlin

Eugene Corr

### Assistant Directors

H. Gordon Boos

K.C. Hodenfield

Maggie Murphy

Sierra 2nd Unit:

Michael Zimbrich

Mark Lyon

### Casting

Victoria Thomas

### Screenplay

Ron Shelton

Based on the book *Cobb*:

A Biography by Al Stump

### Script Supervisor

Karen Golden

### Director of Photography

Russell Boyd

### 2nd Unit Director of Photography

Mark Vargo

### Camera Operators

Stephen St John

Sierra 2nd Unit:

Harry K. Garvin

### Special Visual Effects Supervisor

Mark Vargo

Editor:

Sharon Smith Holley

### Special Optical Effects

Stokes/Kohne

Associates

### Optical Illusions

Digital Effects

Head of Production:

Mitzi Gallagher

Supervisor:

Brad Kuehn

Associate Producer:

Gil Gagnon

Compositing Artist:

Tom Smith

Digital Artists:

Greg Leigey

Doug Tubach

James Valentine

### Animation Technical Supervisor

Derek Spears

### Editors

Paul Seydor

Kimberly Ray

### Production Designers

Armin Ganz

Scott T. Ritenour

### Art Directors

Troy Sizemore

Charles Butcher

### Set Decorator

Claire Jenora Bowin

### Set Dresser

Dwain Wilson

### Illustrators

Trevor Goring

Billboard:

Ted Haigh

### Special Effects Supervisors

Jim Fredburg

Sierra 2nd Unit:

Paul Stewart

### Special Effects

2nd Unit:

Dewey Gene Grigg

Jan H. Aaris

### Costume Design

Ruth E. Carter

### Costume Supervisor

George L. Little

### Make-up

Ve Neill

John Blake

### Hairstylist

Sterfon Demings

Dione Taylor

William Howard

Pamela Priest

### Titles/Opticals

Pacific Title

### Music

Elliot Goldenthal

### Music Conductor

Jonathan Sheffer

### Allan Arrangements

Artie Butler

### Orchestrations

Robert Elhai

### Music Score Producers

Matthias Gohl

Richard Martinez

### Supervising Music Editor

Daniel Allen Carlin

### Songs/Music Extracts

"Theme from a

Summer Place"

by Max Steiner;

"That Old Black Magic"

by Johnny Mercer;

Harold Arlen,

performed by Louis

Prima, Keely Smith;

"Lieslief" by and

performed by Fritz

Kreisler; "At a Georgia

Camp Meeting"

by Fred Mills, Herman

Darewski; "Sweet

Georgia Brown"

by Ben Bernie, Kenneth

Casey, Maceo Pinkard;

"Bleeding Hearted

Blues" by Lovie Austin,

performed by James

P. Johnson; "You're

Driving Me Crazy"

by Walter Donaldson;

"The Way You Look

Tonight" by Jerome

Kern, Dorothy Fields,

performed by The

Jaguars; "March of

the Hoodlums"

by Hoagy Carmichael,

performed by Hoagy

Carmichael and His

Orchestra; "The Ball

Game" by Wynona

Carr, performed by

Sister Wynona Carr;

"Visit to the Wreckage"

by Elliot Goldenthal

### Supervising Sound Editor

Bruce Fortune

### Supervising ADR Editor

Joe Dorn

### Supervising Foley Editor

Shawn Sykora

### ADR Mixer

Bob Deschaine

### Foley Mixers

Mary Jo Lang

Randy Singer

Dolby stereo

consultant:

Daniel Sperry

### Sound Re-recording Mixers

Donald O'Mitchell

Rick Hart

Frank A. Montano

### Sound Effects Editors

Anthony R. Milch

Gary Mundheim

Richard E. Yawn

Donald L. Warner Jr

Bernard Weiser

Dave Stone

Jay Niernburg

Joe DiVitali

Glenn Hoskinson

Victor Iorillo

### Foley Artists

John B. Roesch

Hilda Hodges

### Technical Adviser

Al Stump

### Project Consultant

Ron Birnback

### Stunt Co-ordinator

Jerry J. Gatlin

### Baseball Co-ordinator

Rob Ryder

### Cast

Tommy Lee Jones

Ty Cobb

Robert Wuhl

Al Stump

Lolita Davidovich

Ramona

Ned Beatty

Ray

Scott Burkholder

Jimmy

Allan Malamud

Mud

Bill Caplan

Bill

Jeff Fellenzer

Doug Krikorian

Sportswriters

Gavin Smith

Sportsman's Lounge

Bartender

Lou Myers

Willie

William Utay

Jameson

J. Kenneth Campbell

Professor Cobb

Rhoda Griffis

Ty's Mother

Tyler Logan Cobb

Young Ty

Reverend Gary Morris

Baptist Minister

Jerry J. Gatlin

Train Engineer

Harold Herthum

Jay Chevalier

Gamblers

Roger Clemens

Opposing Pitcher

George Rafferty

Jay Tibbs

Team-mates

Rodney Max

Umpire

Gary D. Talbert

Opposing Catcher

Fred Lewis

David Hodges

Philly Fans

Joy Michiel

Last Chance Hotel Clerk

Michael 'Mitch' Hrushowy

Harrah's Club Manager

Eloy Casados

Louis Prima

Paula Rudy

Keely Smith

Artie Butler

Harrah's Bartender

Robert Earl Berkbigler

Croupier

George P. Wilbur

Casino Security Man

Steven Brown

Husband at Motel

Dana Y. Hill

Wife at Motel

Tony L. McCollum



Stump the story of his father's murder for the first time, Cobb mocks his biographer's seizure of this fact as "the missing piece". Rather than allow this to be misread as a Rosebudian revelation, Cobb insists that he "was a prick before it happened, and a prick after it happened and you can stick that up your Sigmund Freud ass." By the time the ambiguous conclusion rolls around, the very need for heroes has been, if not completely dissected, then at least gutted and spread out on the table.

Baseball in general and baseball biopics in particular share a portion of the blame for forging modern American ideals of heroism, masculinity, and fatherhood in America. It seems appropriate then that Shelton should use the genre to deconstruct all of the above while still being able to convey the glamour and allure of the game. His powerful slow-motion, sepia-toned flashbacks skirt but never descend into cliché. In *Bull Durham* and *White Men Can't Jump*, Shelton displayed a sure touch for rendering the sporting life. Here, there's less playtime on screen, but what is there buttresses the narrative. Thus, if there's something missing from Cobb's character exposition, it's amply expressed in the way we see him steal bases and land a kick in the catcher's face as he flies home. If *Field of Dreams* movingly recuperated the myths of baseball, *Cobb* mangles them afresh, and cuttily historicises them, albeit taking justifiable liberties with the facts. (Stump actually met Cobb on several occasions rather than just the one road-bound bonding session that we see here, for example.)

Having made a career out of playing good ol' boys with nasty streaks, Tommy Lee Jones nails the type down forever. Only an actor with precise comic timing could measure out such tragic moments as when, coughing up blood, he starts to say the Lord's Prayer and gives up the faded hope of redemption with a clipped "fuck it". Robert Wuhl is equally excellent playing catch with the smart dialogue and being a likable sort of blokey mensch as Al Stump. A collection of real life sports-writers put in cameos as Stump's bar-buddies, their crumpled mugs recalling similar cabals of kvetches in *Broadway Danny Rose* and *Diner*. Amongst all this foetid masculinity, Lolita Davidovich is the lone female in the locker room, but her little bit of screen time makes an indelible mark with a near-rape scene that lingers in the mind and keeps Cobb's character in focus.

Baseball movies, unless they star Kevin Costner, seldom go down well with British audiences, so it's unlikely that this one will wow them in Woking. It would be a pity if *Cobb* sunk unnoticed, however, because it's about much more than the life story of the man with the greatest ever lifetime batting average (.367). At the very least, it provokes the question why no one here has ever attempted to tell in cinematic terms the story of, say, George Best, a sporting hero of the same proportions as Ty Cobb.

Leslie Felperin

## Country Life

Australia 1994

Director: Michael Blakemore

### Certificate

tbc  
Distributor  
Metro Tartan  
Production Company  
Australian Film  
Finance Corporation  
Dalton Films Pty Ltd  
Developed with the  
assistance of the  
Australian Film  
Commission  
Producer  
Robin Dalton  
Line Producer  
Adrienne Read  
Production Co-ordinators  
Julie Sims  
Barbara King  
Production Manager  
Lynda Wilkinson  
Unit Manager  
Robert Graham  
Location Manager  
Phillip Roope  
Assistant Directors  
Colin Fletcher  
James McTeigue  
Guy Campbell

Casting  
Alison Barrett  
Screenplay  
Michael Blakemore  
Suggested by Uncle  
Vanya by Anton  
Chekhov  
Continuity  
Pamela Willis  
Director of Photography  
Stephen Windon  
Camera Operator  
Marc Spicer  
Film Editor  
Nicholas Beauman  
Production Designer  
Laurence Eastwood  
Set Decorator  
Donna Brown  
Set Dressers  
Dimitry Huntington  
Ken Muggleston  
Scenic Artists  
Bill Undery  
Michael O'Kane  
Simon Clayton  
Rain Effects  
Ray Fowler  
Costume Design  
Wendy Chuck  
Costume Supervisor  
Miranda Brock  
Make-up/Hair Supervisor  
Lesley Rouvray  
Make-up Artist/Hairdresser  
David Vawser  
Front Titles Background  
Flix Animation  
Titles  
Optical & Graphic  
Opticals  
Roger Cowland  
Music/Music Conductor  
Peter Best  
Music Consultant  
Christine Woodruff

### Songs/Music Extracts

"Keep The Home Fires  
Burning" by Ivor  
Norvello, Lena Guilbert  
Ford; "A Seville,  
Belles Senoras"  
from "Don Cesar  
De Bazan" by Jules  
Massenet, performed  
by Dame Nellie Melba  
Dialogue Editor  
Karin Whittington  
Sound Recordist  
Ben Osmo  
Music Recordist  
David Hemming  
Sound Mixer  
Phil Judd  
Sound Effects Editor  
Gary O'Grady  
Foley Artist  
Angus Robertson  
Foley Sync Recording  
Simon Hewitt  
Armourer  
Robert Coleby  
Horse Wrangler  
Graham Ware

Cast  
Sam Neill  
Dr Max Askey  
Greta Scacchi  
Deborah Voysey  
John Hargreaves  
Jack Dickens  
Kerry Fox  
Sally Voysey  
Michael Blakemore  
Alexander Voysey  
Google Withers  
Hannah  
Patricia Kennedy  
Maud Dickens  
Ron Blanchard  
Wally Wells  
Robyn Cruze  
Violet  
Maurie Fields  
Fred Livingstone  
Bryan Marshall  
Maud Dickens  
Mr Pettinger  
Tony Barry  
Terry Brady  
Loggers  
Tom Long  
Billy Livingstone  
Rob Steele  
James  
Ian Bliss  
David Archdale  
Colin Taylor  
Mr Wilson  
Ian Cockburn  
Mr Archdale  
Reg Cribb  
Vicar  
Derani Scarr  
Woman in Crowd  
Owen Bulk  
Stationhand

tbc feet  
the minutes

Dolby stereo  
In colour

rupted when Max is accused being a friend of the Aborigines and a pacifist.

While Max takes Deborah out for a walk, Jack rifles through Alexander's room, and discovers the poor quality of his writing. Jack becomes obsessed by Deborah, and wants to save her from Alexander. In order to ease the tension between the two women, Deborah promises to find out if Max loves Sally. In the stables, Max shows more interest in Deborah and the two are about to have sex when they are interrupted. Alexander calls a family meeting about his plans to sell Canterbury. Disturbed by a glimpse of Max and Deborah embracing, Jack is angered by the suggestion, runs for a rifle and starts firing at Alexander. He misses, and is talked out of taking his own life by Max.

Alexander and Deborah decide to leave. An uneasy truce is established between Jack and Alexander, as Jack promises to keep sending him money from the land. Max says he won't return for months. Alone again, Jack and Sally determine to carry on their lives as before.

In the opening credits, we read that *Country Life* was "suggested by *Uncle Vanya*". This seems something of an understatement since the film's characters correspond directly to those in Chekhov's play and follow the actions and fortunes of their equivalents directly. Why didn't writer/director Blakemore simply set *Uncle Vanya* in Australia after the First World War since, after all, we are used to far more radical transpositions of such frequently-performed works? But Blakemore has done something different. His narrative strategy might be compared to that behind Jane Smiley's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *A Thousand Acres* where a new story justifies itself and, as if only by coincidence, turns out to be a reworking of *King Lear*.

Those working with a canonical piece often insist on its universality. This point was well illustrated by a recent film, Louis Malle's *Vanya On 42nd Street*. That film's conceit - a group of present-day actors rehearsing in their civvies - suggests that the relationships' dynamic transcends the turn-of-the-century Russian countryside setting. Blakemore is keen to do something different. He needs the looseness a "suggested by" credit offers because he is less interested in univer-

sals than in specific points about Australia's relationship with Britain, with his characters becoming emblems.

Alexander is the Australian infected by Englishness. He is prissy, snobbish, idle. Worse, he is a fraud, claiming a talent he does not have, having spent his time in London living off profits from the Australian land. Max is his opposite in many ways, a practical and hardworking doctor. He looks into the future, not nostalgically into the past: he is the new Australian, keen to be free of ties to the "mother country". Running parallel to these divisions, and possibly resulting from them, are contrasting sensual matters. While Alexander finds it difficult to meet his marital duties and is uninterested in nature, Max is the picture of virility, at home in the wild land. Deborah, bored with her husband, is taken by the sight of Max's buttocks as he bathes in the kitchen. The sight suggests that perhaps Sam Neill thought he was given the wrong part in *The Piano* and is keen to show he can match Harvey Keitel in the bare *derrière* department.

During the past few years, Australian and New Zealand cinema has dwelt on this repression/liberation dualism. Considering such a cultural legacy it's an obvious topic, but it's one that has produced ludicrous results. In John Duigan's *Sirens* an uptight English pair, played by Tara Fitzgerald and Hugh Grant, was subjected to family of free-thinking Aussies (including Sam Neill). That film ought to have killed off for good the symbolic potential of snakes in the bush. But no, *Country Life* sees Max taking Deborah into the country, past a snake, and introducing her to a couple of kangaroos having sex.

Flora also serves symbolic service: Canterbury's English rose garden has withered. Sally proposes in its place a garden of hardy native flowers. While Deborah is the English rose, Sally is herself something of a hardy native. Somewhat bizarrely, Deborah also becomes the "sleek English fox come to gobble up native wildlife". Sonya in *Vanya* - here, Deborah - is always a difficult role. The men project their fantasies onto her, and the character is often silent. In *Vanya on 42nd Street* Julianne Moore managed to suggest that the silence was the result of a decision to keep her own counsel; Scacchi's Deborah just appears to have nothing to say.

Robert Yates



A Cobber's Chekhov: Sam Neill

Canterbury, an Australian sheep station just after the First World War. Alexander returns home from London with a beautiful wife, Deborah, having left 22 years earlier to make his name as a theatre critic. His brother-in-law Jack and his daughter Sally have been taking care of the land. Alexander disrupts the household by insisting on doing things his way. Both Jack and the local doctor, Max, are attracted to Deborah. Sally is in love with Max. The women attend a lecture by Max on progressive farming which is dis-



# Crumb

USA 1995

Director: Terry Zwigoff

## Certificate

18

## Distributor

Artificial Eye

## Production Company

David Lynch presents  
A Superior Pictures  
Production

## Executive Producers

Lawrence Wilkinson  
Albert Berger  
Lianne Halfon

## Producers

Lynn O'Donnell  
Terry Zwigoff

## Co-producer

Neal Halfon

## Location Manager

Andy Reichsman

## Director of Photography

Maryse Alberti

## Additional Photography

Jon Else

Tomas Tucker

Kyle Kibbe

Michael Chin

Ray Day

Ashley James

Nancy Morita

## Editor

Victor Livingston

## Title Design

Gregg Zinn

## Du Art Digital

## Music Arrangements

David Boeddinghaus

## Songs/Music Extracts

"Ragtime Nightingale"

by Joseph Lamb,

"35th Street Blues"

by Charles Levy, "A Real

Slow Drag" by Scott

Joplin, "Frog-I-More

Rag" by Ferdinand

Morton, performed by

David Boeddinghaus;

"Last Kind Word Blues"

by and performed

by Geechie Wiley;

"Comic Montage

Stomp" by David

Boeddinghaus,

performed by David

Boeddinghaus, Craig

Ventresco; "Zap Jam

Boogie-Woogie"

by and performed

by Craig Ventresco;

"Shake It And Break

It" by Friscoe-Clark,

performed by King

Oliver and his

Orchestra

## Sound

Scott Breindel

## Additional Sound Recording

Michael Emery

Curtis Choy

Stephen Longstreth

John Haptas

Sara Chin

Doug Dunderdale

## Dialogue Editors

Francesca Dodd

David Bergad

E. Jeane Putnam

Scott Levitin

## Sound Re-recording Mixer

Walter Murch

## Syncing

Marjorie Hagar

Patti Tauscher

Wendy McLaughlin

## Sound Effects Editor

Krysten Matecomoglio

## Interviewees

Robert Crumb

The Artist

Aline Kominsky

Robert's Wife

Charles Crumb

Robert's Older Brother

Maxon Crumb

Robert's Younger

Brother

Robert Hughes

Art Critic

Martin Muller

Owner, Modernism

Gallery

Don Donahue

Former Zap Comix

publisher

Dana Crumb

Robert's First Wife

Trina Robbins

Cartoonist

Spain Rodriguez

Cartoonist

Bill Griffith

Cartoonist

Deirdre English

Former editor

Mother Jones

Peggy Orenstein

Journalist

Beatrice Crumb

Robert's Mother

Kathy Goodell

Ex-girlfriend

Dian Hanson

Leg Show Magazine

Editor and Ex-girlfriend

Sophie Crumb

Robert and Aline's

Daughter

Jesse Crumb

Robert and Dana's Son

10,816 feet

120 minutes

In colour

fired by his obsession with *Treasure Island*. Younger brother Maxon lives in a hotel, paints and practises yoga techniques; he has a history of molesting women.

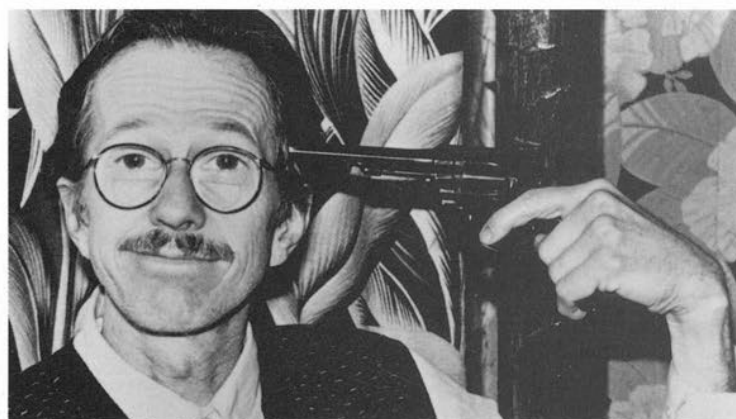
On the occasion of a gallery retrospective, art critic Robert Hughes acclaims Crumb as a contemporary Breughel or Goya. Crumb reminisces about the late 60s, and insists that he never hung out with the fashionable Haight-Ashbury crowd. He recalls his beginnings in underground comics and explains how his characters first emerged after a LSD experience; fellow artists Trina Robbins, Spain Rodriguez and Bill Griffith comment on his work, but Robbins and journalist Deirdre English criticise its misogyny.

Crumb's former girlfriend Dian Hanson, editor of *Leg Show* and other porn mags, invites Crumb to take part in a photo shoot with models, and discusses his sexual predilections, above all his taste for receiving piggybacks. Another ex-girlfriend, Kathy Goodell, accuses Crumb of being callous and ends up hitting him. At home, Aline talks about her own comic art and her hatred of her mother. Crumb gives his son Jesse a lesson in drawing Victorian madwomen. The Crumb brothers recall their childhood in 50s suburbia and their tyrannical father. The sexist and racist aspects of Crumb's strips come under scrutiny.

Robert and Aline and their daughter Sophie prepare to move to France; Crumb winces as his beloved record collection is moved. Titles tell us the family now lives in southern France; that Charles committed suicide the year after being filmed; and that the Crumb sisters Sandra and Carol declined to be interviewed.

The most worrying aspect of *Crumb* is that it carries the credit "David Lynch presents". For sure, the Crumb family is as grotesque and disturbing as any of Lynch's own creations. From their 50s suburban background - described by Robert as an "Ozzie and Harriet hell" - to Charles' adult existence with his mother in a dingy house, the family could be a textbook illustration of that "dark underbelly" of American normality that was once Lynch's stock-in-trade. The credit, though, does lead us to expect some sort of invented weirdness, whereas everything we see is real.

It's the disconcerting ugliness of this reality that makes Terry Zwigoff's portrait so fascinating and so oddly moving. As Robert Crumb's friend, publisher and musical collaborator over 25 years - he played in Crumb's band the Cheap Suit Serenaders - Zwigoff had unique access to less public parts of his subject's life. The result is something rare, a genuine psychobiography in which the subject is revealed less by what he says about himself than by his difference from the people around him. The most important fact about Robert is that somehow he has avoided being Charles or Maxon, just as this late-60s alternative-society icon has always refused to be a part of the cul-



Crumb's discomfort: Robert Crumb

ture that celebrated him.

*Crumb* is more than a little voyeuristic. It's one thing that the cartoonist should lay his psyche open to the camera, but you wonder how much his brothers and mother were prepared for, when they let Zwigoff into their homes. (That the Crumb household appears as a domain of warped maleanness is partly to do with the fact that sisters Sandra and Carol declined to appear.) Charles and Maxon, who seem possessed of acute cerebrality and bitter self-loathing in equal quantities, offer lacerating auto-critiques; but the lucidity of their despair doesn't preempt the camera's ability to frame them as surreal oddballs. Many of their revelations produced hearty but nervous tittering in the screening theatre - not unlike the anxiously amused "Oh my Gaaad" reaction Robert himself greets them with. It's easy to forget that we're marvelling at real people with real problems; that is, until the end of the film, when we learn that Charles killed himself the year after being filmed.

Unlike his brothers, Robert has been able to function in society, partly by designing an armour for himself - a public persona as cartoonish as his self-portraiture on paper. Pebble glasses, straw boater and sandals make this toothy, prematurely venerable scarecrow as distinctive a caricature of Mr Middle America as William Burroughs' patented square-john act, and serving much the same function. Like Burroughs, Crumb proclaims his marginality by pushing anachronistic 'normalness' to an extreme. He is insistent on his non-alignment with the hippie culture that adopted him as its flag-bearer.

Crumb's high-school reminiscences, and glimpses of a blatantly self-pitying autobiographical comic strip, demonstrate that he rescued himself by assuming in extreme form the label inflicted on him - he became a transcendent geek, adopting a foggish demeanour. Robert found a way to make his art communicate to the world, unlike his no less talented brothers - Maxon, whose extraordinary paintings are committed to an extreme formalising of the female body, and Charles, whose sexualised obsession with *Treasure Island* sublimated itself in an increasingly abstract comic art that eventually devolved into hermetic graphomania. Robert, however, comes

across in speech as the least self-aware of the three: Charles, for example, is capable of a ruthless self-analysis: "I'm never constipated - that's about all I can say for myself."

In the scenes with his brothers, Robert plays an amused, almost disbelieving observer, collaborating in our, and the camera's, tendency to view them as freaks. When Maxon recounts his history of molesting women, Robert just sniggers like a teenager being told a gross but innocuous locker room yarn. He similarly seems to cast himself as an observer of his own life: when an ex-girlfriend lays into his infidelity and emotional dishonesty, he grins like a bashful *This is Your Life* subject - until she's driven to slap him.

One thing that seems to have saved him is his ability to dispense with sublimation in his work; as Aline puts it, "He just depicts his id in its pure form." Certainly, his art from the late 60s to the present is marked by its consistent expression of lust and rage, and seems to display a tenderness towards the world only in its freer-flowing, more realistic mode: in his portraits of 1920s blues heroes, or in his versions of Victorian photographs of madwomen.

For the most part, his cartoons present an obsessive loathing of the world and of himself. Many of his strips display in fairly undiluted form the conventional demonology of racism and misogyny - a horde of monstrous, variously deformed odalisques or, least defensible of all, the African character Ooga Booga. The purity of his bile doesn't necessarily make Crumb a Breughel or a Céline, as Robert Hughes implies, nor does it make him a debunker of such hatreds. However, one woman defends his gargantuan broads as empowering images: "He made it possible for me to have a butt."

The most concise image of Crumb, drawn for the film, has him lying in bed, surrounded by cameras and lights, muttering, "I'm nauseous." Zwigoff's great achievement is to make that nausea tangible. The strangest sequence of all is of Crumb's photo-session at his ex's porn mag, receiving mock discipline and real piggybacks from a selection of wholesome high-school majorette types, clearly having the time of his life and riding high on another absurd image of his own abjection.

Jonathan Romney



# D'Artagnan's Daughter (La Fille de D'Artagnan)

France 1994

Director: Bertrand Tavernier

## Certificate

15

## Distributor

Artificial Eye

## Production Companies

CIBY 2000  
Little Bear  
TFI Films Production  
With participation of  
Canal+/Sofica BNP  
Images

## Executive Producer

Frédéric Bouboulon

## Producer

Véronique Bouboulon

## Production Manager

Portugal:

Renato Santos

## Assistant Directors

João-Pedro Ruivo

Jean-Marc Tostivint

Michel Ganz

Tiffany Tavernier

## Screenplay

Michel Leviant

Based on an idea

by Riccardo Freda,

Eric Poindron

## Adaptations

Michel Leviant

Jean Cosmos

Bertrand Tavernier

## Dialogue

Michel Leviant

Jean Cosmos

## Continuity

Zoé Zurstrassen

## Director of Photography

Patrick Blossier

## Steadicam Operators

Pierre Morel

Patrick De Ranter

Marc Koninckx

## Matte Artist

Jean-Marie Vives

## Editor

Ariane Boeglin

## Art Director

Geoffroy Larcher

## Set Decorators

Denis Mercier

Frédéric Duru

## Special Effects

Louis Gleize

Rui Alves

## Costume Design

Jacqueline Moreau

## Make-up

Magali Ceyrat

Eric Pierre

## Hairstylist

Fernando Mendes

## Music

Philippe Sarde

## Supervising Sound Editor

Minh-Tam Nguyen

## Sound

Michel Desrois

Gerard Lamps

## Sound Effects

Jean-Pierre Lelong

## Equestrian Technical Adviser

Mario Lubraschi

## Armourers

Claude Carliez

Michel Carliez

## Cast

Sophie Marceau

Eloïse

Philippe Noiret

D'Artagnan

Claude Rich

Crassac

Sami Frey

Aramis

Jean-Luc Bideau

Athos

Raoul Billerey

Porthos

## Charlotte Kady

Scarlet Woman

## Nils Tavernier

Quentin

Jean-Paul Roussillon

Planchet

Luigi Proietti

Mazarin

Pascale Roberts

Mother Superior

Emmanuelle Bataille

Sister Félicité

Christine Pignet

Sister Céline

Fabienne Chaudat

Sister Frédégonde

Joselin Slassia

Negro

Jean-Claude Calon

Slave Trader

Stéphane Legros

Louis XIV

Maria Pittarresi

Olympe

Jean Martinez

Duke of Longueville

Patrick Rocca

Bargas

Michel Alexandre

The Hollebardier

Fanny Aubert

Sister Huguette

Grégoire Barachin

Jean-Sébastien Pinel

Fencing Pupils

Jean-Pierre Bouchard

Conspirator

Daniel Breton

Recruiting Sergeant

Canto E. Castro

Principal Singing Monk

Carlos Cesar

Innkeeper

Yanina Delannoy

Laure Guillaume

Courtesans

Raymond Faucher

Painter

Filipe Ferrer

Conti

Guilherme Filipe

Duke of Condé

Philippe Flotot

Spanish Ambassador

Adrien Frank

Young Brother

Jean-Claude Frissung

Doctor

Yves Gabrielli

Man of the Right

Michel Ganz

Peasant

Albert Goldberg

Associate

José Gomes

Duke of Beaufort

Françoise Johannel

Harpist

João Lagarto

Jules

Philippe Lazore

Le Premier Maitre

Jean-Pierre Lebrun

Footman

Emmanuel Legrand

Postmaster

François Levantal

Courtier

Mario Luraschi

Henchman

André Maia

Duke of Conflans

Carol Pommes

Sister Germaine

Rémy Riffade

Police Officer

François Sinapi

Ricardo

## Séverine Truquet

Servant

Sylvie Vandenheisen

Anne d'Autriche

Lionel Vitrant

Dying Man

## Vincent Dumestre

Eric Martinez

François Nicolet

The Musicians

11,675 feet

130 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

Subtitles

Perigord, France, 1654. When the Mother Superior of a convent gives an escaped African slave shelter, she is stabbed by the Duc de Crassac. The dying nun extracts a promise from Eloïse D'Artagnan to avenge her death, saying she has written evidence that will see the Duc's accomplice/lover Eglantine punished. Dressed in man's clothing, Eloïse sets off for Paris to find her father. She meets a poet, Quentin La Misère, who sees through her disguise and declares his love for her.

In Paris, Eloïse finds D'Artagnan, now a shabby fencing coach, but he refuses to believe her story. She visits Cardinal Mazarin, Dauphin Louis' Protector, to show him the evidence, but when he signs an order to put Quentin in the Bastille, she leaves hurriedly. His one-eyed assistant suggests she left because she recognised Mazarin's signature on the document she bears.

Mazarin sends soldiers to get the document from her. With her father, Eloïse fights them off, but a poem of Quentin's is taken from her by mistake. The Cardinal decides it must be a code. D'Artagnan rounds up the two living members of his former clique, Porthos and Aramis and they all set off for the convent. Crassac orders his doctor to create a poison that will kill the young king during his coronation. The one-eyed man visits Crassac, but Crassac and Eglantine get him drunk. Eloïse reaches the convent before the musketeers and finds Eglantine tearing up evidence of her past. They fight, Eloïse is overcome and taken to a slave boat with all the nuns.

Crassac buys Eloïse for himself. Eloïse reveals to Eglantine that she knows the story of her past. The musketeers find Crassac's castle and the one-eyed man, whom they recognise to be their supposedly dead partner, Athos. They attack the boat and Quentin learns from a dying crewman about Crassac's plot to kill the king. They ride to Crassac's monastery where Eloïse is imprisoned and Louis is staying the night. D'Artagnan breaks in and tells Louis about the plot. Meanwhile, the jealous Eglantine goes down to the dungeon to kill Eloïse, but Eloïse talks her out of it and together they confront Crassac. A fight ensues and the musketeers enter. Eloïse fences with Crassac on the roof before he is killed by D'Artagnan. On coronation day, D'Artagnan and Eloïse ride off arguing about her future.

A home-made sequel to Dumas' novels, made by Tavernier after the original director fell ill, this old-fashioned piece of ham makes several attempts to provide a present-day feel. First and foremost is the element of feminism, which pitches Eloïse, as a plucky, untrained swordswoman who

prefers wearing trousers to dresses, and has a boyfriend who is not good for much except bad poetry and getting in the way. One of the film's many, rather tired running jokes is the bone of contention between D'Artagnan and Eloïse over Eloïse's lack of femininity. He wants her to learn seemly skills; she wants to be a musketeer. Even so, Eloïse's toughness is a lot of bravado: on several occasions, she has to be rescued by Daddy, while her immediate acceptance of Quentin's love seems a little unguarded for such a clever girl. Her father appears to be right when he comments that she is just a convent girl who has fallen in love with the first man she sees.

Despite its title, you can't help feeling that the film is more interested in the reunion of the former glory boys than in Eloïse. So, the fatter, shabbier D'Artagnan, having fallen out with the Dauphin, is reduced to giving fencing lessons; hearty Porthos has become obsessively greedy; and the cunning Aramis has turned into a suave, wily religioso. There is plenty of play on the age joke as the trio huff and puff their way across country, up castle walls and into uncomfortable tents. But the less convincing corollary to all this is that every time they start fighting (each taking on at least four men at once), they are suddenly amazingly fit and skilled again. It is a further measure of the film's disregard for credibility that during these scenes the men combine anachronistically antique expressions (translated as, "zounds!", "oddsbodkin!") with modern casual one-liner jokes.

Elder statesman Noiret as D'Artagnan and Frey as Aramis, send up the foibles of their characters with just enough subtlety to prevent them from falling headlong into slapstick. But Athos's transformation from a sinister one-eyed man in the service of Cardinal Mazarin to a musketeer, loyally reunited with his former companions, is never explained. It's hard to know whether this is just laziness on the part of the film, or the same kind of self-serving cynicism that swiftly turns Gigi Proietti's engagingly sneaky Cardinal Mazarin into the young king's loyal retainer.

While Crassac and Eglantine do their best to remain roisterously wicked caricatures through the rambling convolutions of their plotting, Eglantine is given pretty short shrift. Not only does she undergo a complete change of heart as Eloïse persuades her to become a goody, but her role in the film shifts bizarrely. In the first half, her murky secret seems to hold the crux of the story. Then it is despatched in a few moments as Eloïse reduces it neatly to a bit of cod psychology - Eglantine has become bad because she was raped as a girl - and the film is whisked off on another strand altogether.

The result is an untidy, careless pastiche of the genre, as full of seemingly unintentional red herrings as it is of intentional ones, and not as entertaining as it tries to be.

Amanda Lipman

# Destiny Turns on the Radio

USA 1995

Director: Jack Baran

## Certificate

15

## Distributor

Entertainment

## Production Company

Savoy Pictures

## Executive Producers

Keith Samples

Peter Martin Nelson

## Producer

Gloria Zimmerman

## Co-producers

Robert Ramsey

Matthew Stone

Raquel Carreras

## Line Producer

Michael D. Pariser

## Production Supervisor

Elyse Katz

## Production Co-ordinator

Denise L. Heinrich

## Production Manager

Michael D. Pariser

## Location Manager

Ilit Jones

## Post-production Supervisor

Michael D. Pariser

## Assistant Directors

David H. Venghaus Jr

Adam Rosen

## Casting

Nicole Arbusto

Joy Dickson

## Voice:

Barbara Harris

## Screenplay

Robert Ramsey

Matthew Stone

## Script Supervisor

Harriette H. Aaron

## Director of Photography

James Carter

## Camera Operator

Martin J. Layton

## Special Visual Effects

Available Light Ltd

## Visual Effects Supervisor

John T. Van Vliet

## Effects Producer

Katherine Kean

## Effects Editor

Dana Desselle

## Optical Supervisor

Beverly Bernacki

## Animators

Michael Gagne

January Nordman

Randy Weeks

## Motion Control Camera

Joseph Thomas

## Editor

Raul Davalos

## Production Designer

Jean-Philippe Carp

## Art Directors

Easton Michael Smith

Dominic Wymark



**Cast**  
**James LeGros**  
 Thoreau  
**Dylan McDermott**  
 Julian Goddard  
**Quentin Tarantino**  
 Johnny Destiny  
**Nancy Travis**  
 Lucille  
**James Belushi**  
 Tuerto  
**Janet Carroll**  
 Escabel  
**David Cross**  
 Ralph Dellaposa  
**Richard Edson**  
 Gage  
**Bobcat Goldthwait**  
 Mr Smith  
**Barry 'Shabaka' Henley**  
 Dravec  
**Lisa Jane Persky**  
 Katrina  
**Sarah Trigger**  
 Francine

**Tracey Walter**  
 Pappy  
**Allen Garfield**  
 Vinnie Vidivici  
**Ralph Brannen**  
 Robert Sparks  
 Henchmen  
**Gordon Michaels**  
 Motorist  
**Che Lujan**  
 Jose  
**Michael O'Connell**  
 Stage Manager  
**Michael Matthys**  
 Lighting Technician

**9.225 feet**  
**102 minutes**

**Dolby stereo**  
**In colour**

Julian Goddard has busted out of prison. He is picked up on the road by the fast-talking, enigmatic Johnny Destiny who drives a Plymouth Roadrunner similar to that driven by Julian's partner Thoreau for a robbery three years before. Destiny drops him in Las Vegas at the Marilyn hotel where Thoreau is working. Julian wants his money and his girl, Lucille. Thoreau tells him that Lucille is now Tuerto's girl and that the money was stolen by a man who is clearly Johnny Destiny. They recall how, on the night of the robbery, they were about to make their getaway when Julian insisted on going to find Lucille and was arrested. Thoreau tells Julian how Johnny Destiny emerged magically out of the motel pool during an electrical storm and zapped Thoreau unconscious. When he woke up, his money and car were gone.

Lucille wants out of Vegas and into a singing career, but she is pregnant. Her manager Ralph has set up a performance for music biz mogul Vinnie Vidivici. She spots Julian from Tuerto's office on the security video. They meet and she tells him that she disappeared on the night of the robbery because she couldn't see any future in being on the run. Destiny makes a deal with Thoreau: in return for repairing the crack in the pool and refilling it, Thoreau will get the car and the money back.

Julian persuades Lucille to sleep with him but Tuerto catches them at it. Julian and Lucille get away, evading the police and Tuerto's hoods. The two decide to get married but after the ceremony Tuerto's men kidnap Lucille and return her to the casino. She tells Tuerto that she loves Julian and he fires her, but the police insist that her evening performance should go ahead as bait for the capture of Julian. Lucille goes on stage and gives the performance of her life. Vinnie raves about her, but she decides to make her getaway with Julian.

Julian, Lucille and Thoreau gather at the motel where the pool has an unearthly glow to it. Destiny arrives and tells them that the pool offers all the directions your life could have taken if you'd made different decisions, then he jumps in. The cops come and,

rather than surrender, Julian and Lucille dive in. Thoreau throws in his money bag and the cops give up through lack of evidence. Thoreau, however, had switched bags, and he leaves Vegas a rich man.

Although it might be seen as another piece of film geek fun associated with Quentin Tarantino, *Destiny Turns on the Radio* is of an older tradition. Like Tom DiCillo's *Johnny Suede* (to name one of many) it is an arch exercise in the recycling of favourite iconography (in this case 50s roadside Americana with a smidgen of 70s Vegas kitsch) in the tranquilised B-movie format that so often passes for serious artistry in the American independent film ever since the inimitable success of Jim Jarmusch. The film's pulp heart – made of sassy dialogue, cheesy characters and an amoral mayhem of mixed motivation – is buried so deep by an ironic distance of tone and performance that it barely pulses.

Director Jack Baran places a heavy burden on his cast, requiring them to regurgitate feedbags of cornball dialogue in longish, static takes (sample: "I've been rolling snake eyes ever since you left"). Action is provided either by the non-stop shoulder-heaving wiggle of Tarantino as Destiny – too embarrassed, at a guess, to stand still for the excruciating lines he's given – or by the deliberately undermined stunting of Dylan McDermott as Julian, such as his skidding arrival at the motel on a motorbike (staged rather than slapstick-clumsy). McDermott's particular stiff quality may well be blow to standard macho characterisation, but he comes across like a fashion model trying to act tough without chipping his fingernails.

If it's all part of the same joke that Nancy Travis as Lucille is neither a particularly steamy presence nor a halfway competent chanteuse, or that Johnny Destiny is about as charismatic as a church deacon in shades, or that Julian looks more like he's been touring Morocco than spending three years in jail, then it is a peculiarly slim one, lost on anyone who hasn't long ago OD'd on repeated viewings of such sobad-it's-good films as Edgar G. Ulmer's *Detour*. If, however, Baran was trying for something more convincing, then he is not a good judge of when a performer is giving their best. Many of his cast members have done well in other films – including Travis, LeGros and Tarantino – but none of them is more than perfunctory here.

The plot's melding of mild sci-fi and cod-noir cries out for a psychological spin on the characters such as that found in the stories of Jim Thompson. Thompson's characters are just as often tools of fate but they strive against it, generating a delirious sense of panic and desperation. The dominant mood in *Destiny* is rather one of fatalism, leaving Johnny Destiny (the character, the symbol and perhaps even the actor himself) with all the cards in his favour and no-one trying to kick his chair over.

**Nick James**

## Eclipse

Canada 1994

Director: Jeremy Podeswa

**Certificate**  
 tbc  
**Distributor**  
 Pagemedia  
**Production Companies**  
 Fire Dog Films  
 Time Medienvertrieb  
 With the participation of Telefilm Canada  
 Ontario Film Development Corporation  
 National Film Board of Canada  
 P.S. Production Services Ltd and The Canada Council: Media Arts  
 In co-production with Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT)  
**Executive Producer**  
 Wolfram Tichy  
**Producers**  
 Camelia Frieberg  
 Jeremy Podeswa  
**2nd Unit/3rd Unit Line Producer**  
 Sandra Cunningham  
**Associate Producer**  
 Regine Schmid  
**Production Co-ordinators**  
 April Poppe  
 2nd Unit: Janine Cote  
**Production Managers**  
 Charlene Olson  
 Additional Units: Christine Alevisakis  
**Location Managers**  
 Remo Giarlo  
 Andrew Munger  
 Lisa Jensen  
 2nd Unit: Dermot Cleary  
**Post-production Supervisor**  
 Catherine Hunt  
**Post-production Co-ordinator**  
 Lewis Cohen  
**Assistant Directors**  
 Bruno Bryniarski  
 Friday Myers  
 David Forsyth  
 2nd Unit: Lewis Cohen  
**Screenplay**  
 Jeremy Podeswa  
**Script Consultant**  
 Daniel MacIvor  
**Continuity**  
 Sarah Willinsky  
 2nd Unit: Nancy Markle  
**Script Supervisor**  
 Selene Strilesky  
**Story Editor**  
 Allan Magee  
**Director of Photography**  
 Mirosław Baszak  
**2nd Unit Director of Photography**  
 Rudy Blahacek  
**3rd Unit Camera**  
 Michael Spicer  
 José Ludlow  
**Video Segment Producer**  
 David Findlay  
**Video Consultant**  
 Bill Sweetman  
**ESL Video Graphics**  
 Robin Len  
**2nd Unit Graphic Designer**  
 Valerie Kaelin  
**Editor**  
 Susan Maggi  
 Additional: Anna Pafamow  
**Art Director**  
 Tamara Deverell  
**Set Decorator**  
 Michael McShane  
**Set Dressers**  
 Patrick Lefebvre  
 Denis A. Mildner  
**Costume**  
 Aline Gilmore

**Junifur Jarvis**  
 Tamara Winston  
**Make-up/Hair**  
 Sylvain Gourmoyer  
**Opticals**  
 Film Effects Inc  
**Music**  
 Ernie Tollar  
**Music Performed by**  
 Vocalists: Brenna MacGrimmon  
 Naoi Alikhan  
 Yvette Tollar  
 Meryn Cadell  
 George Koller  
 Ahmed Hassan  
 Instrumentalists: George Koller  
 John Gzowski  
 Rick Lazar  
 Ravi Naimpalli  
 Colin Couch  
 Dick Armin  
 David Restivo  
 Mark Duggan  
 Tom Third  
**Song**  
 "You're My Thrill"  
 by Washington-Lane,  
 performed by Meryn Cadell  
**Dialogue Editor**  
 Fred Brennan  
**ADR Editors**  
 Sue Conley  
 Michael Werth  
**2nd Unit Sound Recordist**  
 Henry Embry  
**Sound Mixer**  
 David Horton  
 Stereo consultants  
 Daniel W. Victor Jnr  
 Brian Black  
**Sound Re-recording Mixers**  
 Frank Morrone  
 Christian Cooke  
**Supervising Sound Effects Editor**  
 Jane Tattersall  
**Sound Effects Editor**  
 Sean Kelly  
**Foley**  
 John Sivert

**Cast**  
**Von Flores**  
 Henry  
**John Gilbert**  
 Brian  
**Pascale Montpetit**  
 Sylvie  
**Manuel Aranguiz**  
 Gabriel  
**Maria Del Mar**  
 Sarah  
**Greg Ellwand**  
 Norman  
**Matthew Ferguson**  
 Angelo  
**Earl Pastko**  
 Michael  
**Daniel MacIvor**  
 Jim  
**Kirsten Johnson**  
 Carlotta  
**Ian Orr**  
 Professor  
**Rosalind Kerr**  
 Brian's Wife  
**Dylan Stukator-McMahon**  
 Sarah's Baby  
**Tracy Wright**  
 Souvenir Shop Clerk  
**Michael McMurtry**  
 Record Store Clerk  
**Scott Wilson**  
 Tattoo Guy  
**Yan Cui**  
 Eclipse Scientist  
**Greg Mandziuk**  
 TV Newscaster  
**Takeshi Deguchi**  
 Randy Attwood  
**Bob Taylor**  
 Amateur Astronomers

**Jong Hwa Kim**  
 Sakiko Motooka  
 Tomohiro Nakano  
 Nobuko Tomiuro  
 Tourists  
**Sylvain Gournoyer**  
 Laurence Heartz  
 Lou Labrecque  
 Marc Mondor  
 Brad Payne  
 Gary Ponzio  
 Mark Shields  
 Hustlers  
**Davis Mirza**  
 Mike Woods  
 Go-Go Dancers  
 Alexander Braun  
 Cute Young Thing  
 Christopher Eamon  
 Patrick Lefebvre  
 Denis Mildner

**Davis Mirza**  
 Dominic Stubbs  
 Robert Windrom  
 Justus Zola  
 Tearoom Boys  
 John Nightingale  
 Jacinta McDonnell  
 Soap Opera Actors  
 James White  
 ESL Video Instructor  
 Bill Cameron  
 Russ Morgan  
 Shelagh Rogers  
 Eclipse Broadcasters

**the feet**  
**the minutes**

**Ultra stereo**  
**Black and white/Colour**  
**Partly Subtitled**

In the two weeks leading up to an eclipse of the sun over Toronto, Canada – a countdown marked by media overkill, and recorded on camcorder by a precocious teenager, Angelo, for a school project – ten men and women of diverse ages and backgrounds (including Angelo) become part of a chain of sexual encounters.

Brian, a repressed, married, middle-aged businessman, has anxious backstreet sex with Henry, a young south-east Asian hustler. On another day, Henry snatches sex with his indifferent and contemptuous housekeeper Sylvie, a French-speaking Québécoise recently arrived in Toronto. At the language centre where Sylvie learns English, she meets Gabriel, a Central American refugee. Her pity for him unleashes desire and she initiates lovemaking. Crying at the sight of his scars, she pours out memories – in French – of her unhappy adolescent promiscuity with her brothers and their friends, none of which he can understand. Gabriel visits Sarah, the beautiful upper-class Venezuelan wife of his Canadian immigration lawyer, and they resume a passionate affair. However his awareness that this bourgeois "bored housewife" would never be available to him in his own country makes him hostile, and they part.

The affair exacerbates Sarah's doubts about her relationship with her husband, Norman, and his bland reassurances fail to satisfy her. A day later the nervous, guilt-ridden Norman has his first-ever gay sexual encounter – with Angelo, the beautiful teenager who is videoing the run-up to the eclipse. Angelo drops in on Michael, a jaded and promiscuous artist with whom he once had sex. Though tritely fascinated by Angelo's beauty, recording it on endless polaroids, Michael rejects him after sex. Michael visits his best friend Jim, once briefly his lover. After cynically dissecting the failings of their past sexual relationship, Michael manipulates Jim into making love; but afterwards Jim, secretly in love with Michael, weeps, knowing that the encounter meant nothing to Michael.

Jim seeks solace in a gay club where, to his horror, he is accosted by Carlotta, a loud young woman whose unstoppable talk and tall stories are a front for desperation. Pursued by her into the orgasmic dark of the men's toilets, he reluctantly gives in to her physical



advances. Next morning – on the day of the eclipse – Carlotta wakes up with Henry. Although they are strangers and remember nothing of the night before, they make tentative, tender social contact, but she rejects his offer of a coffee and leaves. Rushing to the window, Henry sees the eclipse begin. As it darkens the city, each of the ten characters watches it in profound isolation – ending with Brian, who suffers a heart attack in his car.

● Sharing a producer with Atom Egoyan's *Exotica*, featuring actors previously seen in Egoyan's *The Adjuster*, Denys Arcand's *Love and Human Remains* and (en masse) in David Wellington's *I Love a Man in Uniform*, and directed by the one-time publicist of David Cronenberg's *Dead Ringers*, *Eclipse's* preoccupations – postmodern disengagement, alienated human relations, the sexuality of manipulation and its technology (video) – seem a little overdetermined. While the claim that its affinities with Egoyan's "cinema of disappointment" (a label which could equally well be applied to a broader set of Canadian films from Arcand's 1986 *Decline of the American Empire* onwards) has some substance, the sensation of watching a me-too movie is at times hard to shake off. Nevertheless, this cross-pollination has given the recent Canadian cinema much of its energy, and a first feature which succeeds (where *Love and Human Remains* failed) in bringing eloquence, subtlety and humour to themes of urban impersonality and casual sex can't be so lightly dismissed.

*Eclipse's* subject is not sex in itself (pleasure and release are virtually absent from its couplings) so much as sexuality as it functions socially: sex as an expression – and exposer – of power, control, anxiety, self-image, joyless drives and unfulfilled (perhaps unfulfillable) needs. Layers of ambiguous analogy are embedded in the imagery of the eclipse: a professor Angelo interviews for his video project intones that "A world without light is a reminder of how precarious our existence really is". What the director Podeswa brings to this material is a self-deflating quality. Ironical parallels between the thrill/risk/disappointment of gazing at this natural wonder (looking at the eclipse unprotected can cause blindness) and the thrill/risk/disappointment of a sexual encounter are established early on when the camera lingers on a poster ad for sunglasses whose slogan – "Be smart, be safe: protect your eyes" – hijacks the language of safe sex campaigns to simultaneously exploit both the eclipse and fears about it.

*Eclipse* has a structural simplicity which works to its advantage when focusing on the finer nuances of trysts between characters who are strangers to one another as much as they are to us. The hustler Henry learns Brian's name not because Brian volunteers it but from a document he idly picks up in Brian's car. Brian, in turn, fails to understand (or ignores) his housekeeper Sylvie's pointed statements that

sex between them is, for her, a necessary financial transaction. (When he asks "Do you find me attractive?" she replies: "Yeah, you're great – your cheques never bounce".)

By contrast, the tender pathos of Sylvie's encounter with Gabriel and the unexpected liberation Norman experiences with the promiscuous, non-committal but emotionally generous Angelo, suggest that true intimacy may be snatched in the unlikelyst of collisions. The characters with the least economic and political power strive most to make contact with others; conversely, Brian and Michael, seemingly with the greatest power to define and gratify their sexual desires, are shown to be the least capable of intimacy, pleasure or reciprocation. For Michael in particular, the exercise of control – whether by cataloguing his past conquests in a photographic installation entitled *Memento Mori*, freezing Angelo's "perfect" beauty on endless Polaroids or seducing Jim in order to reject him – is a joyless end in itself.

Shot in colour-tinted black-and-white (itself a distancing device), these unerotic sequences subject not the bodies of the participants to scrutiny but their faces: tense, repressed, indifferent, briefly released – but most often with a tantalising unreadability. Even at their moments of greatest intimacy, Podeswa's characters conceal more than they give away. These crisp duochrome encounters are intercut viewed with extracts, in grainy camcorder colour, from the video Angelo is supposed to be making. The twist is that the interviews he conducts with experts, astronomers, tourists and local traders frenziedly cashing in on eclipse fever – from a woman selling eclipse sweatshirts and beer glasses to a record-shop employee explaining that sales of *Don't Let the Sun Go Down On Me* and *Total Eclipse of the Heart* are soaring – are in fact documentary footage shot in Baja California, Mexico at the time of the seven-minute solar eclipse of July 1991.

The resulting blurring of fact and fiction is by far *Eclipse's* most appealing aspect – mainly because it drags the film away from clinical postmodern disengagement in the direction of the kind of larger-than-life social satire practised by Arcand in his better movies (notably *Jesus of Montreal*) and, in another context, by TV Nation's Michael Moore. The would-be profound pronouncements of the international eclipse experts are surreally banal beyond fictional invention ("It's like a reversal of nature," drivels one), and a party of Japanese eclipse enthusiasts are nonplussed when asked to describe what it is they have travelled halfway round the world to see. "I don't know – just day turned to night, I guess," one replies. Podeswa achieves his avowed goal of portraying his fictional human relationships with a complex, contradictory realism absent from most films; but he succeeds equally well in showing just how unreal late 20th-century reality can be.

Claire Monk

## Ermo

China/Hong Kong, 1994

Director: Zhou Xiaowen

### Certificate

Not yet issued

### Distributor

ICA Projects

### Production Company

Ocean Film Co  
(Beijing/Hong Kong)  
In association with  
Shanghai Film Studio

### Executive Producer

Li Ran

### Producers

Jimmy Tan  
[Chen Zhitao]  
Chen Kunming

### Production Managers

Han Guichen  
Zhao Liqi

### Assistant Directors

Liu Jing  
Chen Quan

### Screenplay

Lang Yun  
Based on the short  
story by Xu Baoqi

### Director of Photography

Lu Gengxin

### Editor

Zhong Furong

### Art Director

Zhang Daqian

### Sets

Ma Ying

### Costume Design

Liu Jingli

### Make-up

Li Yingchun

### Music

Zhou Xiaowen

### Music Performed by

Chen Baohui

### Sound Recorder

Hong Yi

### Cast

Ailiya [Aila]

Ermo

Liu Peiqi

Xiazi – 'Blind'

Ge Zhijun

Ermo's Husband –

'Village Chief'

Zhang Haiyan

Xiazi's Wife

Yan Zhenguo

Huzi, Ermo's Son

Yang Xiao

Xiu'er, Xiazi's daughter

Yang Shenzia

Zhi Yanyan

Shen Enshen

Chen Baoshang

Wu Jun

Du Hui

Li Yong'gui

Gao Songhai

Yang Wenming

Yue Guizhi

Ren Fengwu

Wang Wenzhi

Wang Shiling

Wang Jinbao

Zhang Guizhi

Li Guining

Zhang Xiaoyan

Zhang Yiyang

Yang Xiaoxia

Guo Shuguang

8,820 feet

98 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

Subtitles

● A village in North China. Ermo works hard making and selling twisted noodles to support her supposedly disabled husband (the former village chief) and their son Huzi, who is constantly going next door to watch television. She regularly trades insults with her overweight neighbour, mother of a girl named Xiu'er, but gets on well enough with Xiu'er's father, nicknamed Xiazi ('Blind'), who is the owner-driver of a truck. While her husband dreams of building a bigger house, Ermo determines to buy a television set of her own. Meanwhile, she attacks her hated neighbour by poisoning her pig.

Xiazi cajoles her into joining him in a trip to the nearest town, where she finds that she can sell her noodles at a much higher price – and sees a hugely expensive 29-inch television set in the department store. Ermo begins making frequent visits to town with Xiazi, and her husband begins to suspect them of having an affair. Xiazi finds her a job in the kitchens of a new restaurant; she stays in a cheap hostel and makes only occasional trips back to the village, compulsively saving her money. When she discovers that the hospital pays for blood donations she becomes a frequent blood donor, and her health begins to suffer.

During a drive back to the village one night, Xiazi stalls his truck and gropes her. They become lovers, but Xiazi is horrified to learn that she regularly

sells blood and orders her to stop. Puzzled by receiving a fatter pay-packet than other workers at the restaurant, Ermo discovers that Xiazi has been secretly boosting her wages. Outraged at being treated like a whore, she quits the job and returns home, resuming her old job making and selling twisted noodles. Xiazi considerably deflects gossip from her by sleeping with a town prostitute and getting himself beaten up by her pimp.

By the time that New Year comes around, Ermo has saved enough to buy the 29-inch television set. Her noodle-strainer is pressed into service as an antenna. But she collapses from exhaustion and apparent anaemia soon after the set is switched on. Many villagers are soon visiting Ermo's house to watch television. But the only place to put the set is on the bed, and so Ermo and her husband and son sleep as best they can on wooden chairs.

● In the story and character of Ermo, 'Fifth Generation' director Zhou Xiaowen has found a perfect cypher for the meaning and effect of change in rural China. Comparisons will obviously be drawn with Zhang Yimou's *The Story of Qiu Ju* – not only because it's about another feisty peasant woman with a mission, but also because Liu Peiqi (who played Qiu Ju's injured husband) reappears here as Xiazi, the richest man in the village – but *Ermo* rather cruelly exposes the political sleight-of-hand that underpins *Qiu Ju*. Zhou's film doesn't look or pretend to be like documentary, and has no pretension to make grand statements about the reliability of officials or the credibility of China's new legal system; it simply tells a story about a young woman who has the misfortune to get what she thinks she wants. The real comparison ought to be with Li Shaohong's brilliant *Bloody Morning* (*Xueshe Qingchen*, 1990), the only recent film to offer a truthful and shocking account of all the obstacles to change in the Chinese countryside.

*Ermo* begins and ends with the sound of Ermo selling her twisted noodles by the roadside. The opening, a tightly-framed shot of Ermo squatting beside her food cart which becomes the film's visual leitmotiv, is scrupulously naturalistic. The ending, a slow track in on the 'snow' on the television screen after the close of broadcasting with the sound of Ermo's street-cry overlaid, is calculatedly ironic: it summarises the distance Ermo has travelled while underlining the emptiness of all she has achieved. In between, the film shows a tough but uneducated peasant woman struggling to come to terms with a barrage of new experiences: eating out in a restaurant, working in a semi-automated kitchen, selling her blood, buying a television set and being unfaithful to her wreck of a husband. She learns quickly but pragmatically, picking up only what she needs to know and never acquiring any larger perspective. The core of her experience remains the backbreaking work through which she supports her ►





Manners and gestures: Alia in 'Ermo'

◀ husband and son: the nights spent kneading dough with her feet, extruding noodles through the manual press and hanging them to dry on racks in the yard. Zhou's film is not a sentimental account of her 'education' but a cunningly formulated question. What, it asks, is the true nature of *satisfaction* in present-day China?

Zhou is smart enough to know that this question is as funny as it is tragic, and his film reflects that ambivalence precisely. But although Ermo's naiveté generates much of the film's humour, Zhou never tries to get laughs at her expense. When Ermo first sees the television set in the town store, for example, it's playing a Chinese-dubbed tape of a western softcore sex film to a silent, rapt audience of peasants. Ermo registers her bafflement that the foreigners are speaking Chinese, but the real 'joke' is far more complex. What does it mean to show a shoddy foreign sex movie to people who have never met a foreigner or, indeed, travelled any further than the nearest county town? Like all peasants everywhere, these people have a matter-of-fact attitude to their own sexuality, but they also have a clear-cut sense of (Confucian) morality. Will seeing this sanitised foreign sex affect their thinking about sex itself? If so, how? Is watching this tape one of the factors that later convinces Ermo to betray her husband and succumb to Xiazi's advances? These are all funny/serious questions, and the film savours them – and many others like them – as such.

Zhou shoots the film almost entirely from static angles, trusting his compositions and choice of detail within the frame to produce all the questions and contradictions. (The only camera movements are tracking shots towards the television screen and occasional shots following foreground action.) This decision minimises the impact of visual rhetoric and throws the emphasis

instead on to Zhou's very exact social observations, which are strong enough to take the weight. Everything is anchored in believable sociological detail: the weight problem of Xiazi's wife (reflecting his affluence and her consequent self-indulgence), the canniness of the peasant whose donkey is knocked over by Xiazi's terminally battered truck, the contrasted attitudes of state-employed shop assistants (rude) and privately employed restaurant staff (parroting courtesies), the squalor of the 'hotel' where Xiazi takes Ermo for sex and the grotesqueness of the anti-wrinkle cream he buys her as a gift. The fact that all of this rings so true depends to a large extent on Zhou's expert casting. Mongolian actress Alia (who made her screen debut in Zhou's long-banned *Black Mountain/Heishan Lu*, 1990) gives a truly fearless performance in the lead, and the actors around her match her absorption in the manners and gestures of peasant life.

The last thing seen on the television set which usurps Ermo's much-needed place on the family bed is the international weather forecast: the coming day's climate and temperatures in Tokyo, Bangkok, London... This is both naturalistic (China's CCTV does indeed close its broadcasting each day with this forecast) and another of Zhou Xiaowen's seriously absurdist jokes. That information about tomorrow's weather in Europe is available to villagers in North China undoubtedly represents 'progress', but what does this progress mean? Ermo, of course, doesn't care what appears on the television screen; English lessons, American football and episodes of *Dynasty* are all the same to her. All she cared about was owning the biggest television set in the region, and she got it. As Zhou himself observes: "I love Ermo, because she's selfish and she's honest".

**Tony Rayns**

## A Feast at Midnight

United Kingdom 1994

Director: Justin Hardy

### Certificate

PG  
Distributor  
Entertainment  
Production Company  
Kwai River productions  
Executive Producers  
Jonathan Green  
Alok Oberoi  
Producer  
Yoshi Nishio  
Line Producer  
Jonathan Hercock  
Production Co-ordinator  
Steve Ackhurst  
Location Manager  
Mary Fletcher  
Production Manager/Post-production Supervisor  
Perry Gibbs  
2nd Unit Director  
Brad Miller  
Assistant Directors  
Shaun Deeney  
Michael Elliott  
Brad Miller  
Casting  
Jeremy Zimmermann  
Screenplay  
Justin Hardy  
Yoshi Nishio  
Script Supervisor  
Linda Gibson  
Director of Photography  
Tim Maurice-Jones  
2nd Unit Photography  
Nicholas Jardine  
Paul Kinsop  
Camera Operator  
Peter Wignall  
Editor  
Michael Johns  
Production Designer  
Christiane Ewing  
Art Director  
Tom Pye  
Scenic Artist  
Clare Andrade  
Costume Design  
Verity Hawkes  
Make-up/Hairstylist  
Lesley Lamont-Fisher  
Music/Arranged/  
Performed by  
David Hughes  
John Murphy  
Music Supervisor  
Brad Miller  
Dubbing Editors  
Paul Bingley  
Susan Middlewick  
Brian Blamey  
Sound Recordist  
Simon Clark  
Sound Re-recording Mixer  
Rupert Scrivener

Christopher Lee  
Longfellow (Raptor)  
Robert Hardy  
Headmaster  
Samuel West  
Chef  
Carol Macready  
Miss Plunder  
Lisa Faulkner  
Miss Charlotte  
Edward Fox  
Magnus' Father  
John Hurley  
Cabbie  
Sebastian Fernandez-Armesto  
Oberoi  
Stuart Hawley  
Bathurst  
Jordan Ruffell  
Mee  
Edward Hassard  
Cubitt  
Matthew Blakiston  
Merriman  
Dominic Dowbekin  
Williams  
Harry Stapleton  
Pears  
Jake Meyer  
Luerssen  
Tom Radcliffe  
Burkhart  
Julie Dreyfus  
Mother  
Michael Gove  
Chaplain  
Dan Fenton  
Monsieur Joudren  
Michael Fenner  
Mr Bathurst  
Julian Ellison  
Milkman  
Brian Cant  
Mr Hill  
Stuart Moore  
Jane Moore  
German Couple  
Jack Fletcher  
Father's Chauffeur  
Bruce McCrae  
Max Elliot  
George Elliott  
Les Harding  
Leigh Burr  
Sally Massey  
Jan Price  
Heidi Vines  
Paul Dowbekin  
Rosemary Dowbekin  
Martin Butt  
Donald Duncan  
Dominic Le Moignan  
Nicky Le Moignan  
Colyn Moore  
Hawtreys School Staff and Pupils  
Additional Cast

Cast  
Freddie Findlay  
Magnus  
Alad Roberts  
Goof  
Andrew Lusher  
Tava

9,560 feet  
106 minutes  
Dolby stereo  
In colour

Ten-year-old Magnus arrives alone at an exclusive but financially desperate boarding school in the English countryside, sent there by a mother distracted by modelling assignments and a father who is seriously ill. The Headmaster puts him under the wing of the school sports champion, Bathurst, who is also a bully, and explains the school's food policy: health food only. On Magnus' first night, the boys humiliate teenage under-matron Miss Charlotte. On the following day, she talks to Magnus about her longing to visit Paris.

When Bathurst forces Magnus to pay a Maltesers tariff, Magnus complains to the fierce Latin master Longfellow, and is branded a sneak. He tries to run away from school but Longfellow brings him back and is about to punish him when the headmaster interrupts, announcing a visit from Magnus mother. Later Magnus discovers that Longfellow is Charlotte's father.

Some boys on the roof are ogling Charlotte as she takes a bath. Magnus joins in, Charlotte sees him and feels betrayed. Magnus is caught taking part in a prank after lights out. As punishment he misses a weekend with his father, remaining behind with other unpopular boys. He suggests that they raid the out-of-bounds kitchen and make unhealthy food. The boys, ostracised for being talentless at sport, form their own club, the Scoffers.

In the coming weeks, the club grows. Magnus slips into town for the ingredients for a blackberry tart. As the Scoffers eat, they are discovered by Charlotte, but she says nothing. The boys stand up to Bathurst, who has been excluded from the Scoffers. In return he plans to scupper their scheme to cook a chocolate cake for Charlotte's birthday. Charlotte is duly lured to the swimming pool at midnight where she dances, swims and eats cake with the boys until her father, tipped off by Bathurst, bursts in. The cake was laced with alcohol by Bathurst's lackey, Mee. Magnus is blamed and expelled. Longfellow leaves to marry the matron, Miss Plunder. Magnus' father collects him and promises him a place in cooking school in Paris. On the way they pick up Charlotte, who has made her peace with her father.

The expectations raised by the title *A Feast at Midnight*, its star Christopher Lee, and the pedigree of its director Justin Hardy – whose father Robin Hardy directed Lee's most infamously dark performance in *The Wicker Man* – last mere minutes into the actual film. Uncertainty as to where the plot might lead, as a young boy enters an isolated prep school where every child and teacher seems fixated on the subject of food (are the boys to be eaten?) is replaced by the realisation of something equally bizarre. Dispensing with a notion held by British cinema since *If...*, that prep and public schools are cruel dystopias, *A Feast at Midnight* drags us back to a simpler nation, where every fictional school adventure was privately funded. These are the school-days that *Grange Hill* terminated, resurrected in a tale which its makers claim is quintessentially English and has an international appeal, in the tradition of *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.

*Feast* is a more curious film than such a calculation suggests, one completely permeated by its antiquated subject matter. Its makers have unearthed ten-year-old boys who can still embody the cherubic naughtiness of Richmal Crompton's William, boys who can say "You're a whiz!" without blushing. Tim Maurice-Jones' cinematography, richly

When Bathurst forces Magnus to pay a Maltesers tariff, Magnus complains to the fierce Latin master Longfellow, and is branded a sneak. He tries to run away from school but Longfellow brings him back and is about to punish him when the headmaster interrupts, announcing a visit from Magnus mother. Later Magnus discovers that Longfellow is Charlotte's father.

Some boys on the roof are ogling Charlotte as she takes a bath. Magnus joins in, Charlotte sees him and feels betrayed. Magnus is caught taking part in a prank after lights out. As punishment he misses a weekend with his father, remaining behind with other unpopular boys. He suggests that they raid the out-of-bounds kitchen and make unhealthy food. The boys, ostracised for being talentless at sport, form their own club, the Scoffers.

In the coming weeks, the club grows. Magnus slips into town for the ingredients for a blackberry tart. As the Scoffers eat, they are discovered by Charlotte, but she says nothing. The boys stand up to Bathurst, who has been excluded from the Scoffers. In return he plans to scupper their scheme to cook a chocolate cake for Charlotte's birthday. Charlotte is duly lured to the swimming pool at midnight where she dances, swims and eats cake with the boys until her father, tipped off by Bathurst, bursts in. The cake was laced with alcohol by Bathurst's lackey, Mee. Magnus is blamed and expelled. Longfellow leaves to marry the matron, Miss Plunder. Magnus' father collects him and promises him a place in cooking school in Paris. On the way they pick up Charlotte, who has made her peace with her father.

The expectations raised by the title *A Feast at Midnight*, its star Christopher Lee, and the pedigree of its director Justin Hardy – whose father Robin Hardy directed Lee's most infamously dark performance in *The Wicker Man* – last mere minutes into the actual film. Uncertainty as to where the plot might lead, as a young boy enters an isolated prep school where every child and teacher seems fixated on the subject of food (are the boys to be eaten?) is replaced by the realisation of something equally bizarre. Dispensing with a notion held by British cinema since *If...*, that prep and public schools are cruel dystopias, *A Feast at Midnight* drags us back to a simpler nation, where every fictional school adventure was privately funded. These are the school-days that *Grange Hill* terminated, resurrected in a tale which its makers claim is quintessentially English and has an international appeal, in the tradition of *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.

*Feast* is a more curious film than such a calculation suggests, one completely permeated by its antiquated subject matter. Its makers have unearthed ten-year-old boys who can still embody the cherubic naughtiness of Richmal Crompton's William, boys who can say "You're a whiz!" without blushing. Tim Maurice-Jones' cinematography, richly

When Bathurst forces Magnus to pay a Maltesers tariff, Magnus complains to the fierce Latin master Longfellow, and is branded a sneak. He tries to run away from school but Longfellow brings him back and is about to punish him when the headmaster interrupts, announcing a visit from Magnus mother. Later Magnus discovers that Longfellow is Charlotte's father.

Some boys on the roof are ogling Charlotte as she takes a bath. Magnus joins in, Charlotte sees him and feels betrayed. Magnus is caught taking part in a prank after lights out. As punishment he misses a weekend with his father, remaining behind with other unpopular boys. He suggests that they raid the out-of-bounds kitchen and make unhealthy food. The boys, ostracised for being talentless at sport, form their own club, the Scoffers.

In the coming weeks, the club grows. Magnus slips into town for the ingredients for a blackberry tart. As the Scoffers eat, they are discovered by Charlotte, but she says nothing. The boys stand up to Bathurst, who has been excluded from the Scoffers. In return he plans to scupper their scheme to cook a chocolate cake for Charlotte's birthday. Charlotte is duly lured to the swimming pool at midnight where she dances, swims and eats cake with the boys until her father, tipped off by Bathurst, bursts in. The cake was laced with alcohol by Bathurst's lackey, Mee. Magnus is blamed and expelled. Longfellow leaves to marry the matron, Miss Plunder. Magnus' father collects him and promises him a place in cooking school in Paris. On the way they pick up Charlotte, who has made her peace with her father.

The expectations raised by the title *A Feast at Midnight*, its star Christopher Lee, and the pedigree of its director Justin Hardy – whose father Robin Hardy directed Lee's most infamously dark performance in *The Wicker Man* – last mere minutes into the actual film. Uncertainty as to where the plot might lead, as a young boy enters an isolated prep school where every child and teacher seems fixated on the subject of food (are the boys to be eaten?) is replaced by the realisation of something equally bizarre. Dispensing with a notion held by British cinema since *If...*, that prep and public schools are cruel dystopias, *A Feast at Midnight* drags us back to a simpler nation, where every fictional school adventure was privately funded. These are the school-days that *Grange Hill* terminated, resurrected in a tale which its makers claim is quintessentially English and has an international appeal, in the tradition of *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.

*Feast* is a more curious film than such a calculation suggests, one completely permeated by its antiquated subject matter. Its makers have unearthed ten-year-old boys who can still embody the cherubic naughtiness of Richmal Crompton's William, boys who can say "You're a whiz!" without blushing. Tim Maurice-Jones' cinematography, richly

When Bathurst forces Magnus to pay a Maltesers tariff, Magnus complains to the fierce Latin master Longfellow, and is branded a sneak. He tries to run away from school but Longfellow brings him back and is about to punish him when the headmaster interrupts, announcing a visit from Magnus mother. Later Magnus discovers that Longfellow is Charlotte's father.

Some boys on the roof are ogling Charlotte as she takes a bath. Magnus joins in, Charlotte sees him and feels betrayed. Magnus is caught taking part in a prank after lights out. As punishment he misses a weekend with his father, remaining behind with other unpopular boys. He suggests that they raid the out-of-bounds kitchen and make unhealthy food. The boys, ostracised for being talentless at sport, form their own club, the Scoffers.

In the coming weeks, the club grows. Magnus slips into town for the ingredients for a blackberry tart. As the Scoffers eat, they are discovered by Charlotte, but she says nothing. The boys stand up to Bathurst, who has been excluded from the Scoffers. In return he plans to scupper their scheme to cook a chocolate cake for Charlotte's birthday. Charlotte is duly lured to the swimming pool at midnight where she dances, swims and eats cake with the boys until her father, tipped off by Bathurst, bursts in. The cake was laced with alcohol by Bathurst's lackey, Mee. Magnus is blamed and expelled. Longfellow leaves to marry the matron, Miss Plunder. Magnus' father collects him and promises him a place in cooking school in Paris. On the way they pick up Charlotte, who has made her peace with her father.

The expectations raised by the title *A Feast at Midnight*, its star Christopher Lee, and the pedigree of its director Justin Hardy – whose father Robin Hardy directed Lee's most infamously dark performance in *The Wicker Man* – last mere minutes into the actual film. Uncertainty as to where the plot might lead, as a young boy enters an isolated prep school where every child and teacher seems fixated on the subject of food (are the boys to be eaten?) is replaced by the realisation of something equally bizarre. Dispensing with a notion held by British cinema since *If...*, that prep and public schools are cruel dystopias, *A Feast at Midnight* drags us back to a simpler nation, where every fictional school adventure was privately funded. These are the school-days that *Grange Hill* terminated, resurrected in a tale which its makers claim is quintessentially English and has an international appeal, in the tradition of *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.

*Feast* is a more curious film than such a calculation suggests, one completely permeated by its antiquated subject matter. Its makers have unearthed ten-year-old boys who can still embody the cherubic naughtiness of Richmal Crompton's William, boys who can say "You're a whiz!" without blushing. Tim Maurice-Jones' cinematography, richly

When Bathurst forces Magnus to pay a Maltesers tariff, Magnus complains to the fierce Latin master Longfellow, and is branded a sneak. He tries to run away from school but Longfellow brings him back and is about to punish him when the headmaster interrupts, announcing a visit from Magnus mother. Later Magnus discovers that Longfellow is Charlotte's father.

Some boys on the roof are ogling Charlotte as she takes a bath. Magnus joins in, Charlotte sees him and feels betrayed. Magnus is caught taking part in a prank after lights out. As punishment he misses a weekend with his father, remaining behind with other unpopular boys. He suggests that they raid the out-of-bounds kitchen and make unhealthy food. The boys, ostracised for being talentless at sport, form their own club, the Scoffers.

In the coming weeks, the club grows. Magnus slips into town for the ingredients for a blackberry tart. As the Scoffers eat, they are discovered by Charlotte, but she says nothing. The boys stand up to Bathurst, who has been excluded from the Scoffers. In return he plans to scupper their scheme to cook a chocolate cake for Charlotte's birthday. Charlotte is duly lured to the swimming pool at midnight where she dances, swims and eats cake with the boys until her father, tipped off by Bathurst, bursts in. The cake was laced with alcohol by Bathurst's lackey, Mee. Magnus is blamed and expelled. Longfellow leaves to marry the matron, Miss Plunder. Magnus' father collects him and promises him a place in cooking school in Paris. On the way they pick up Charlotte, who has made her peace with her father.

The expectations raised by the title *A Feast at Midnight*, its star Christopher Lee, and the pedigree of its director Justin Hardy – whose father Robin Hardy directed Lee's most infamously dark performance in *The Wicker Man* – last mere minutes into the actual film. Uncertainty as to where the plot might lead, as a young boy enters an isolated prep school where every child and teacher seems fixated on the subject of food (are the boys to be eaten?) is replaced by the realisation of something equally bizarre. Dispensing with a notion held by British cinema since *If...*, that prep and public schools are cruel dystopias, *A Feast at Midnight* drags us back to a simpler nation, where every fictional school adventure was privately funded. These are the school-days that *Grange Hill* terminated, resurrected in a tale which its makers claim is quintessentially English and has an international appeal, in the tradition of *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.

*Feast* is a more curious film than such a calculation suggests, one completely permeated by its antiquated subject matter. Its makers have unearthed ten-year-old boys who can still embody the cherubic naughtiness of Richmal Crompton's William, boys who can say "You're a whiz!" without blushing. Tim Maurice-Jones' cinematography, richly

When Bathurst forces Magnus to pay a Maltesers tariff, Magnus complains to the fierce Latin master Longfellow, and is branded a sneak. He tries to run away from school but Longfellow brings him back and is about to punish him when the headmaster interrupts, announcing a visit from Magnus mother. Later Magnus discovers that Longfellow is Charlotte's father.

Some boys on the roof are ogling Charlotte as she takes a bath. Magnus joins in, Charlotte sees him and feels betrayed. Magnus is caught taking part in a prank after lights out. As punishment he misses a weekend with his father, remaining behind with other unpopular boys. He suggests that they raid the out-of-bounds kitchen and make unhealthy food. The boys, ostracised for being talentless at sport, form their own club, the Scoffers.

In the coming weeks, the club grows. Magnus slips into town for the ingredients for a blackberry tart. As the Scoffers eat, they are discovered by Charlotte, but she says nothing. The boys stand up to Bathurst, who has been excluded from the Scoffers. In return he plans to scupper their scheme to cook a chocolate cake for Charlotte's birthday. Charlotte is duly lured to the swimming pool at midnight where she dances, swims and eats cake with the boys until her father, tipped off by Bathurst, bursts in. The cake was laced with alcohol by Bathurst's lackey, Mee. Magnus is blamed and expelled. Longfellow leaves to marry the matron, Miss Plunder. Magnus' father collects him and promises him a place in cooking school in Paris. On the way they pick up Charlotte, who has made her peace with her father.

The expectations raised by the title *A Feast at Midnight*, its star Christopher Lee, and the pedigree of its director Justin Hardy – whose father Robin Hardy directed Lee's most infamously dark performance in *The Wicker Man* – last mere minutes into the actual film. Uncertainty as to where the plot might lead, as a young boy enters an isolated prep school where every child and teacher seems fixated on the subject of food (are the boys to be eaten?) is replaced by the realisation of something equally bizarre. Dispensing with a notion held by British cinema since *If...*, that prep and public schools are cruel dystopias, *A Feast at Midnight* drags us back to a simpler nation, where every fictional school adventure was privately funded. These are the school-days that *Grange Hill* terminated, resurrected in a tale which its makers claim is quintessentially English and has an international appeal, in the tradition of *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.

*Feast* is a more curious film than such a calculation suggests, one completely permeated by its antiquated subject matter. Its makers have unearthed ten-year-old boys who can still embody the cherubic naughtiness of Richmal Crompton's William, boys who can say "You're a whiz!" without blushing. Tim Maurice-Jones' cinematography, richly

When Bathurst forces Magnus to pay a Maltesers tariff, Magnus complains to the fierce Latin master Longfellow, and is branded a sneak. He tries to run away from school but Longfellow brings him back and is about to punish him when the headmaster interrupts, announcing a visit from Magnus mother. Later Magnus discovers that Longfellow is Charlotte's father.

Some boys on the roof are ogling Charlotte as she takes a bath. Magnus joins in, Charlotte sees him and feels betrayed. Magnus is caught taking part in a prank after lights out. As punishment he misses a weekend with his father, remaining behind with other unpopular boys. He suggests that they raid the out-of-bounds kitchen and make unhealthy food. The boys, ostracised for being talentless at sport, form their own club, the Scoffers.

In the coming weeks, the club grows. Magnus slips into town for the ingredients for a blackberry tart. As the Scoffers eat, they are discovered by Charlotte, but she says nothing. The boys stand up to Bathurst, who has been excluded from the Scoffers. In return he plans to scupper their scheme to cook a chocolate cake for Charlotte's birthday. Charlotte is duly lured to the swimming pool at midnight where she dances, swims and eats cake with the boys until her father, tipped off by Bathurst, bursts in. The cake was laced with alcohol by Bathurst's lackey, Mee. Magnus is blamed and expelled. Longfellow leaves to marry the matron, Miss Plunder. Magnus' father collects him and promises him a place in cooking school in Paris. On the way they pick up Charlotte, who has made her peace with her father.

The expectations raised by the title *A Feast at Midnight*, its star Christopher Lee, and the pedigree of its director Justin Hardy – whose father Robin Hardy directed Lee's most infamously dark performance in *The Wicker Man* – last mere minutes into the actual film. Uncertainty as to where the plot might lead, as a young boy enters an isolated prep school where every child and teacher seems fixated on the subject of food (are the boys to be eaten?) is replaced by the realisation of something equally bizarre. Dispensing with a notion held by British cinema since *If...*, that prep and public schools are cruel dystopias, *A Feast at Midnight* drags us back to a simpler nation, where every fictional school adventure was privately funded. These are the school-days that *Grange Hill* terminated, resurrected in a tale which its makers claim is quintessentially English and has an international appeal, in the tradition of *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.

*Feast* is a more curious film than such a calculation suggests, one completely permeated by its antiquated subject matter. Its makers have unearthed ten-year-old boys who can still embody the cherubic naughtiness of Richmal Crompton's William, boys who can say "You're a whiz!" without blushing. Tim Maurice-Jones' cinematography, richly



autumnal in the film's several pastoral interludes, and David Hughes and John Murphy's cheesy early 70s mood score, add to the feeling of a film transported into a time warp, where the harsh social cinema of the 60s and 80s is unimaginable. It's like a Children's Film Foundation film laid on for the ruling classes.

It is also, as its makers hope, "quintessentially English" but in a way that's surely unsellable to Americans and of only nostalgic interest to Britons. Its 50s schoolchildren are adrift in a pastiche of the last possible cinematic moment - the gently entropic early 70s - in which they could possibly exist. They are joined there by Lee's archly named Major Longfellow and Hattie Jacques-manqué Miss Plunder whose exchanges are an expert homage to Carry On films ("There's nothing like good old-fashioned dumplings Mister Longfellow!"). The effect is complete when Magnus hitches a lift with the film's token pleb, a milkman ("Never had a toff in the back of my float before"), to get blackberry tart filling from a kindly old shopkeeper.

The only edge to *Feast* comes from small acknowledgements that it is set in 1995. When the shy 18-year-old under-matron, Miss Charlotte, tries to quieten the boys after lights out, she is met by a battery of thrusting ten-year-old groins, their owners shouting "Kawang!" until she's driven to tears. This queasily unpleasant instance of sexual humiliation suggests a less happy side to the sexual segregation of ten-year-olds, but it is slipped in early and the idea is never developed. The school's unpopular replacement of tarts with tofu causes a rare moment of social awareness. "Empires were not built on rabbit food!" Longfellow thunders, to which the head sagely replies, "We don't have an Empire".

Longfellow's nickname, Raptor, implies his nearness to extinction. It's a suggestive nickname also for *Feast's* most obvious pleasure, the presence of Christopher Lee. Waking at one point in the sudden eye-snapping manner of Dracula, he then slips into carpet slippers, his iconic hiss replaced by a clearing of the throat, until he looms at the school's kitchen doors, pipe fuming, in a witty parodic nod to both *Jurassic Park* and the horror cinema which Lee helped to found.

Of course, there's much to this film which is cloying and even unpleasant, not least Edward Fox's voice-over as Magnus' father, seemingly styled on Mr Kipling ads and given to musings on the "exceedingly fragrant" Charlotte and the notion of "fitting in" which suggest that, at heart, *Feast* is exactly as reactionary as it appears. Nevertheless the film is played, written and directed with skill and charm. In its misplaced confidence in an extinct culture, it is also reminiscent of much recent British pop (Blur, amongst others) - falling back on a period (the early 70s) which its makers understand, until someone explains to them what to do about today.

Nick Hasted

## Guarding Tess

USA 1994

Director: Hugh Wilson

Certificate  
12

Distributor  
Columbia TriStar  
Production Company  
TriStar Pictures  
presents  
A Channel Production

Producers  
Ned Tanen  
Nancy Graham Tanen  
Associate Producer/Unit  
Production Manager  
Jonathan Filley

Location Manager  
Walter S. Hall  
Location Co-ordinator  
Holly Lanahan

Assistant Directors  
Henry Bronchtein  
Michele Ziegler  
Michael DeCasper

Casting  
Aleta Chappelle

Screenplay  
Hugh Wilson  
Peter Torokvei

Script Supervisor  
Mary A. Kelly  
Director of Photography  
Brian J. Reynolds

Aerial Photography  
Don Sweeney  
Camera Operators  
Erich Roland

Additional:  
Dick Kratina  
William Coleman  
Editor  
Sidney Levin

Production Designer  
Peter Larkin  
Art Director  
Charley Beal

Set Decorator  
Leslie Rollins  
Set Dressers  
Paul Bowman

Tom Scruggs  
Elizabeth Weber  
Scenic Artist  
Keith Weaver

Special Effects  
Douglas Retzler  
Connie Brink  
Costume Design

Ann Roth  
Sue Gandy  
Costume Supervisors  
Benjamin Wilson

Donna Maloney  
Make-up Artists  
Allen Weisinger

Selena Miller  
Hairstylists  
Vera Mitchell

Colleen Callaghan  
Title Design  
Frank Foster

Titles  
Sony Pictures  
Imageworks  
Music

Michael Convertino  
Orchestrations  
John Neufeld

Music Editor  
Kenneth Wannberg  
Songs/Music Extracts

"Madamina Il Catalogo  
e Questo" from "Don  
Giovanni" by Wolfgang  
Amadeus Mozart,

performed by  
Giuseppe Taddei  
with the Philharmonia  
Orchestra; "Overture"

by Wolfgang Amadeus  
Mozart, performed by  
Wiener Symphoniker,

Bruno Weil; "Ich Gehe,  
Doch Rate Ich Dir"

from "Die Entführung  
aus dem Serail"

by Wolfgang Amadeus  
Mozart, performed by  
Wiener Symphoniker,

Bruno Weil, Güther

Missenhardt, Elzbieta  
Szymka; "Shout"  
by Ronald Isley,  
Rudolph Isley, O'Kelly  
Isley, performed by  
The Isley Brothers;  
"Joy To The World"

Choreography  
Mary Ann Kellogg  
Supervising Sound Editor  
Victoria Rose Sampson

Sound Editors  
Bruce Lacey  
Randle Akerson

Virginia Cook  
McGowan  
Catt LeBaigue  
Harry Cheney

Mark Mangino  
Supervising ADR Editor  
Linda Folk

Supervising Foley Editor  
David L. Horton Jnr  
Sound Mixer

James Sabat  
Foley Recordist  
Nerses Gezalyan

Foley Mixer  
Jim Ashwill  
Music Scoring Mixer

Dennis Sands  
Sound Re-recording Mixers  
B. Tennyson

Sebastian II  
Gregory H. Watkins  
Carlos de Larios

Foley Artists  
Dan O'Connell  
Gary Hecker

Stunt Co-ordinator  
Jerry Hewitt

Cast  
Shirley MacLaine  
Tess Carlisle

Nicolas Cage  
Doug Chesnic  
Austin Pendleton

Earl  
Edward Albert  
Barry Carlisle

James Rebhorn  
Howard Shaeffer  
Richard Griffiths

Frederick  
John Roselius  
Tom Bahlor

David Graf  
Lee Danielson  
Don Yesso

Ralph Buoncristiani  
James Lally  
Joe Spector

Brant Van Hoffman  
Bob Hutcherson  
Harry J. Lennix

Kenny Young  
Susan Blommaert  
Kimberly Cannon

Bale Dye  
Charles Ivy  
James Handy

Neal Carlo  
Stephen S. Chen  
Jimmy

Katie O'Hare  
Barbara  
Mark Conway

Caleb Harrison  
David L. King  
Derrick Hastings

Jane Beard  
Michael Gabel  
Kidnappers

Kelly Williams  
Mr Porter  
Beverly Brigham

Autograph Seeker  
Toman Treadway  
Kyle Duval

Andrew C. Boothby  
Shariel Paris  
Gary Glaesser

FBI Men  
Brian Beemhan  
Plainclothes Guard

Julie Kurzava  
Michael Consoli

Opera Singers  
Hugh Wilson  
President's Voice  
Brenna McDonough  
Doctor  
John Leonard Thompson  
Young Doctor  
Saige Spinney  
Waitress  
Gerald Gough  
Store Manager  
George Gomes  
James Carlisle  
Bob Child  
Shaeffer's Assistant  
John Louis Fischer  
Crew Member  
Diana Sovie  
Hairdresser

Maggie Linton  
Carlo's Secretary  
Jim Hild  
Helicopter Doctor  
Will Bellais  
Major Domo  
Matilde Valera  
Yvonne Hernandez  
Marie McKenzie  
Nurse  
Al Cerullo Jnr  
Helicopter Pilot  
Michael A. Echols  
Orderly

8.585 feet  
95 minutes

Dolby stereo  
In colour  
Technicolor

Thankful to have completed a three-year assignment guarding former First Lady Tess Carlisle in Summersville, Ohio, Secret Service agent Doug Chesnic returns to Washington for his next posting. His Director, Neal Carlo, breaks the news that at the personal request of the President he is to continue to head the seven-man Ohio team, a job which, thanks to the petulance of Mrs Carlisle, consists of a daily battle of wills. While Doug takes his duties very seriously, Tess treats her guards like domestic servants, subject to petty household rules and innumerable menial tasks. Grimly resuming his role as chief target for Tess' moods, Doug announces that he and his men will no longer run trivial errands; the immediate result of his defiance is a call from the President, to whom Tess has complained, asking him to be more co-operative.

Tess decides to go to the opera in Columbus, Ohio. Their departure is delayed when Doug insists on the correct seating arrangements but the trip is otherwise uneventful until, in the middle of the show, Tess falls noisily asleep. When Doug discreetly tries to wake her there is even more noise; Tess is angry and humiliated but the warm acclaim of her public restores her good humour. On the way home she orders her chauffeur, Earl, to give their Secret Service escort the slip, and Doug has to request the help of the local sheriff to trace her car. He attempts to get Earl dismissed but after a blazing row Tess orders Doug and his men out of the house. On the phone from Air Force One, the President orders him to restore harmony as soon as possible.

Locked out, Doug gloomily maintains surveillance from the perimeter

of the Carlisle estate. After a visit from her son Barry, who hopes to gain her support for a dubious business project, Tess at last relents, recognising that Doug is the only reliable person in her life, and an evening at the local bar marks the start of a new friendship between them. There is news of an intended Presidential visit, causing much fluster and planning, but when this is abruptly cancelled Doug is saddened to see Tess lose some of her vitality. After a period of inertia, she decides to have a picnic, although snow is forecast; afterwards, Earl again drives off with Tess unguarded, leaving Doug, marooned. It becomes apparent that Tess has been kidnapped.

When Doug alerts Washington to Tess' disappearance, an army of government men arrives to take control and Doug's team is sidelined in disgrace. Tess' car is found, with Earl beaten up beside a ransom note, and Doug realises that the chauffeur had to be an accomplice. Accompanied by top F.B.I. official Howard Shaeffer, Doug visits Earl in hospital and threatens to shoot him; terrified, Earl admits that Tess was kidnapped by his own sister and her husband. They have her hidden under the floor of a barr., and Doug insists that he and his men are the rescuers who dig her out. In turn, although barely conscious, Tess demands that her Secret Service team be the ones to accompany her to hospital. When she is fully recovered it is on Doug's orders that she accepts a wheelchair for her departure from hospital, cheered on by the patients and staff.

Since the peculiar risks of riding shotgun over a celebrity are known to every showbiz bouncer and press attaché, as well as to every journalist assigned to dodge the defences and hit the story target, there is a certain familiarity about *Guarding Tess*, not least thanks to its echoes of *The Bodyguard*. While few may previously have given much thought to the fate of past Presidents and their families, said to exist in greater numbers than ever before in Stateside history, the haunting spectacle of (for example) Coppola's *Godfathers* with their self-sacrificing retinue of shadows have increasingly accustomed audiences to households blighted with an excess of armed staff. Looking for a fresh slant on the inherent parallel themes of domestic power struggle and generation gap ani- ▶



National treasure: Shirley MacLaine



◀ mosity, embodying an irrefutable hint of *Driving Miss Daisy* – and, for that matter, of Miss Haversham, the matriarch of eccentricity – the creators of *Guarding Tess* have nothing much more to offer than Shirley MacLaine who has become, in entertainment terms at least, about as First a Lady as could be hoped for.

To her credit, hers is a relievingly underplayed Norma Desmond, all ter-magant qualities well under control. Although required to rail against the Secret Service stranglehold that represents the residue of her share of history, and although incarcerated with a pack of protectors whose evident instability would be the envy of Roderick Usher, she refrains from hurling furniture, unleashing obscenities, or ravaging the wine cellar. Instead, even when the script requires her to cheat against herself at golf, she maintains an assertive dignity, a poise which serves her well when her odious son is unmasked as an unscrupulous con-man, or – with particular pathos – when her face hardly changes at the news that there will, after all, be no Presidential visit. Against this delicacy, Nicolas Cage can show little but exasperation, resorting to a series of frenzied outbursts (some, admittedly, sounding like an attempt to be heard above the blare of the music soundtrack) which only serve to emphasise that his role is curiously without substance or background. If we might guess, by the time of their reconciliation, that he is intended to be a replacement for both son and husband in a life without much future, it is hard to see what contribution other than a unquestioning devotion he will be able to make to Tess' welfare.

Given that Hugh Wilson was responsible for *Police Academy*, the film's indulgence towards its minor players is to be expected. Even so, the abrupt miming to Mozart by Richard Griffiths seems to have strayed in from some other show, and Austin Pendleton's contribution as the wimpish chauffeur is so lugubriously comical that the whole kidnap episode, with its parodied C.I.A. musclemen, appears destructively close to farce. Wilson himself provides the voice of the beleaguered President, whose phone calls make a wonderfully unsettling intervention: "I've got the most important job in the world," he complains to the incredulous bodyguard, "so maybe you two have some kinda sicko thing goin' on but you gonna help me out on this one, okay?" This bizarre *Dr Strangelove* tone works absurdly well, as does the visit to the supermarket when the manager checks nervously whether or not the First Lady wishes to be incognito and the agents mutter into their handsets about the special offer on peas. But it drains all vestigial realism from Tess' predicament, despite being set among superb production designs by Peter Larkin, and reduces it to the vaguely sentimental, a daft and muddled homage to those whose fame may painfully have overtaken their usefulness.

**Philip Strick**

## The Mangler

USA 1994

Director: Tobe Hooper

**Certificate**  
18  
**Distributor**  
Guild  
**Production Company**  
Distant Horizon  
In association with  
Allied Film Productions  
**Executive Producer**  
Harry Alan Towers  
**Producer**  
Anant Singh  
**Associate Producer**  
Rita Marie Bartlett  
**Production Co-ordinators**  
Sandra Mazzotti  
L.A.:  
Anita Hope  
**Unit Production Manager**  
Genevieve Hofmeyr  
**Unit Manager**  
Michael Snell  
**Post-production Supervisors**  
Lelsey Fox  
Brian Cox  
London:  
Paul Janssen  
**2nd Unit Director**  
Stephen Brooks  
**Assistant Directors**  
Graham Hickson  
Philip Mosoeu  
Gavin Joubert  
Shane Mohabier  
Diane McCarthy  
**Casting**  
Christa Schamberger  
**Screenplay**  
Tobe Hooper  
Stephen Brooks  
Peter Welbeck  
Based on a short story  
by Stephen King  
**Script Supervisor**  
Maureen Conway  
**Director of Photography**  
Amnon Salomon  
**Camera Operators**  
2nd Unit:  
Clive Lawrie  
Vincent Cox  
**Visual Effects**  
Buena Vista  
Visual Effects  
**Producer:**  
Carolyn Soper  
**Co-ordinator:**  
Denise Davis  
**Digital Supervisor**  
Craig Newman  
**Digital Compositing**  
Wally Schaab  
Dorne Huebler  
Kevin Koneval  
Peter Montgomery  
**Digital Scanning/Recording**  
Bruce Tauscher  
**Digital Artwork**  
Elissa Bello  
**Computer Generated Demon**  
Aaron Campbell  
**Matte Painting**  
Paul Lasaine  
**Effects Animation**  
Michael Lessa  
**Line-up**  
Winston Quitsol  
**Graphic Design**  
Rosalind Lurie  
Peter De Jager  
**Editor**  
David Heitner  
**Production Designer**  
David Barkham  
**Set Dressers**  
Jeanne Henn  
Hamid Croukamp  
**Draftsmen**  
Leslie Stone  
Ivan Hancock  
**Scenic Artists**  
Roland Hunter  
Ray Wynne-Roberts  
Christopher Bass  
Rossana Pancaldi  
Sydney Mbutini  
Stephen Madonsela

**Storyboard Artist**  
Finella Beyers  
**L.A. Sculptors**  
Scott Patton  
Mitch Devane  
**Model Maker**  
Jenny Sandler  
**L.A. Mold Makers**  
Bernie Eichholz  
Brad Kisko  
Brian Sipe  
**Mangler Art Director**  
Zac Grobelaar  
**Mangler Co-ordinator**  
Teri-Lin Hinds  
**Mangler Sculptors**  
Patricia Victor  
Micha Ramsay  
**Special Effects Co-ordinator**  
Max Poolman  
**Special Effects**  
Maximum Effects  
**Prosthetics Co-designer**  
Todd Masters  
**Costume Design**  
Moira Anne Meyer  
**Wardrobe Master**  
Darion Hing  
**Make-up**  
Tracy Crystal  
L.A.:  
David Miller  
Barry Koper  
**L.A. Special Make-up Effects**  
Scott Wheeler  
Productions  
Scott Coulter  
**Hairstylists**  
Lloyd Power  
L.A.:  
Denise Dillan  
**Music**  
Barrington Pheloung  
**Music Performed by**  
The London  
Metropolitan Orchestra  
**Sound Design**  
Nicky De Beer  
**Dialogue Editors**  
Nikki Van Niekkerk  
Charlotte Buys  
**ADR Supervisor**  
Christopher Welch  
**ADR Editors**  
Colette Russouw  
Elinor Hardy  
**Foley Editor**  
Wayne Lines  
**Sound Mixer**  
Richard Sprawson  
**ADR Mixers**  
Sid Knowles  
L.A.:  
Tommy Goodwin  
**Foley Mixer**  
Sid Knowles  
**ADR Recordist**  
L.A.:  
Dana Porter  
**Music Recordist/Mixer**  
Dave Hunt  
Dolby stereo consultant  
John Isles  
**Sound Re-recording Mixer**  
Mark Phillips  
**Sound Transfers**  
Akbar Ali Goolam  
Edwin Lawson  
**Sound Effects Editor**  
Robert Thorpe  
**Special Sound Effects**  
Warwick Swinney  
**Mangler Voice Effects**  
Tim Cummings  
**Foley Artists**  
Juliet Phillips  
Leith Ridley  
**Additional ADR**  
Joyce Kurtz  
**Medical Consultant**  
Doctor Joseph Teeger  
**Stunt Co-ordinator**  
Gavin Mey  
**Armourer**  
Hire Arms

**Cast**  
Robert Englund  
Bill Gattley  
Ted Levine  
John Hunton  
Daniel Matmor  
Mark Jackson  
Jeremy Crutchley  
Pictureman  
Mortician  
Vanessa Pike  
Sherry Ouelette  
Demetre Phillips  
Stanner  
Lisa Morris  
Lin Sue  
Vera Blacker  
Mrs Frawley  
Ashley Hayden  
Annette Gillian  
Danny Keogh  
Herb Diment  
Ted Lepat  
Doctor Ramos  
Todd Jensen  
Roger Martin

Sean Taylor  
Derrick Gates  
Gerrit Schoonhoven  
Aaron Rodriguez  
Nan Hamilton  
Mrs Ellenshaw  
Adrian Waldron  
Mr Ellenshaw  
Norman Coombes  
Judge Bishop  
Larry Taylor  
Sheriff Hughes  
Irene Frangs  
Mrs Smith  
Megan Wilson  
Ginny Jason  
Odile Rault  
Alberta  
Ron Smerczak  
Officer Steele

9,509 feet  
106 minutes

Dolby stereo  
In colour  
Prints by  
Technicolor

On the outskirts of Rikers Valley lies a vast laundry processing plant, where exhausted women slave for the cruel and deformed owner, Bill Gattley, and his industrial steam-iron, "the mangler". A series of strange accidents is triggered when an icebox falls on the machine, wounding a young worker named Sherry Ouelette who is Gattley's niece. Blood drips on the mechanism, which soon gobbles an old lady, Mrs Frawley. Officer John Hunton is called in to investigate.

Already on the scene is a photographer, Pictureman. Mark Jackson, Hunton's brother-in-law, tries to convince Hunton that the mangler is possessed, but the Sheriff records a verdict of accidental death. Subsequently, a small child is found suffocated inside the plant's icebox from the plant. When Hunton batters the object with a mallet a huge whirlwind of energy is released. Pictureman suddenly dies of cancer, bequeathing to Hunton a scrapbook of cuttings. These reveal that many virginal daughters of the town's powerful elite have gone missing on their sixteenth birthdays. Hunton confronts Gattley. There is a struggle and Gattley's foreman, Stanner, gets caught in the mangler.

Hunton is warned off the case. Most of the town turn out to be in league with Gattley and the machine. Gattley initiates his lover Lin Sue into the demonic club and when the machine demands a new sacrifice, they present it with Sherry, who is turning sixteen. Hunton and Jackson arrive just in time. Lin Sue is rolled and crushed, whilst Gattley is folded to death. But an attempted exorcism only succeeds in bringing the mangler fully to life. Jackson is killed and Hunton and Sherry escape – but not before Sherry has lost some blood to the machine. Later, when Hunton visits Sherry at the plant he discovers she has developed similar handicaps to her dead uncle, is in charge of the factory and everything is running as normal.

The Mangler assembles something of a modern horror-genre hall of fame: director Tobe Hooper (*The Texas*

*Chain Saw Massacre*, *Poltergeist*) is teamed with Robert Englund (of Freddy Krueger fame) and Ted Levine (*The Silence of the Lambs*) in yet another adaptation for the screen of a Stephen King short story. The film scores high on production finesse: new digital editing techniques give many of the cast amputated fingers, the gore is viscerally convincing and the sequence where the 40-foot machine becomes a kind of giant mechanical bullfrog is well done. Yet all this fails to add up to a frightening movie; the giant laundry machine does not translate from the page to the screen as a motor of menace.

Stephen King worked in a laundry while making his name as a writer, and the force of *The Mangler*, seems to derive in part from his desire to revenge himself on his old job. In his story, fear is generated not simply by the figure of the possessed machine, but by the gradual uncovering of the human consensus which nurtures and supports it. The tale takes as its premise Nietzsche's vision of a perfect society whose social cohesiveness is provided by mystical forces released by the sacrifice of children.

Thus in Rikers Valley, the town elite have agreed to feed to the mangler demon their middle fingers and a proportion of their virginal offspring in return for a life of saccharine suburban bliss. But, in the film, the device is used cheaply, dispelling its power: libidinousness is purchased easily by having the machine demand only daughters, and not sons, and since Gattley is the only member of the elite that we actually meet, the necessary mood of paranoia is never achieved. The human evil of Rikers Valley never gains enough weight to compensate for the steam-iron's failure to terrify.

Englund, having honed his horror acting to a fine degree in all of those *Elm Street* movies, does a good job as the deranged and deformed capitalist who has to tweak his throat knob to stop himself gargling with excitement when he watches his young lover undress. But despite his efforts the film's major theme – the melding of human with machine – fares badly. Englund's character has been maimed by the mangler in his youth and is practically a cyborg. Encased in leg braces and sporting a mis-matched artificial eye he drools to Hunton: "There's a little bit of me in that machine, and a little bit of it in me."

Again we are short-changed by the simplicity of the film's conceptual framework, in which human plus machine equals evil, and existential hero plus righteous outrage equals good. Ted Levine's cop with a past (not a patch on his Buffalo Bill in *The Silence of the Lambs*) fails to carry the protagonist's burden: he can't seem to decide whether to go for a detached parody or try to generate audience identification, and in the end manages neither. The audience is left, like Hunton in the final scene, bemused that things have turned out like they have, but not really that bothered either way.

**James Flint**



# Man of the House

USA 1994

Director: James Orr

## Certificate

## Distributor

Buena Vista  
Production Company  
Walt Disney Pictures  
Forever Girls  
Productions

## Executive Producer

Margaret South  
Producers  
Bonnie Bruckheimer  
Marty Katz

## Associate Producer/

## Production Manager

Casey Grant

## Production Co-ordinator

Lynn Barr

## Location Manager

Tim Haughian

## 2nd Unit Director

James Head

## Assistant Directors

Peter Marshall

Sandy McGiffert

Bill Bannerman

Daniel R. Suhart

Wayne Bennett

2nd Unit:

Morgan James Beggs

Derek Hurst

## Casting

Amy Lippens

LA Associate:

Barbie Block

Canada:

Michelle Allen

## Screenplay

James Orr

Jim Cruickshank

## Story

David Peckinpah

Richard Jefferies

## Script Supervisors

Lara Fox

2nd Unit:

Glynda Fitzgerald

## Director of Photography

Jamie Anderson

## 2nd Unit Director

of Photography

James Head

## Camera Operators

David Crone

Joel Ransom

2nd Unit:

Harvey LaRocque

Rod Parkhurst

## Steadicam Operator

David Crone

## Visual Effects Supervisor

Michael Lessa

## Visual Effects

Buena Vista

Visual Effects

## Editor

Harry Keramidas

## Production Designer

Lawrence G. Paull

## Art Director

David Willson

## Set Design

Alex Kameniczky

## Set Decorator

Rose Marie McSherry

## Set Dressers

Brent Bennett

Diarmuid Conway

## Head Scenic Artists

Ken Wells

Larry Osland

## Storyboard Artist

David Lux

## Special Effects Co-ordinator

Mike Vezina

## Costume Design

Tom Bronson

Canada:

Toni Rutter

## Costume Supervisor

Debi Weldon

## Make-up Artists

Key:

Victoria Down

Lee C. Harman

## Hairstylists

Ian Ballard

Mela Murphy

Dorothy D. Fox

## Title Design

Susan Bradley

## Titles/Opticals

Buena Vista Imaging

## Music

Mark Mancina

## Music Performed by

Piano Solos:

Ralph Grierson

## Orchestrations

Bruce Fowler

S. Y. Moriarty

## Music Editor

Curtis Roush

## Songs/Music Extracts

"Louie, Louie"

by Richard Berry,

performed by

The Kingsmen; "Choke"

by Marc Ferrari, Peter

Ajemian, performed

by The Children;

"Return To Innocence"

by Michael Cretu,

performed by Enigma;

"Gonna Make You

Sweat (Everybody

Dance Now)" by Robert

Clivillés, Frederick

Williams, performed

by C&C Music Factory;

"Confusion" by Marc

Ferrari, Danny Gill,

Michael Mulholland,

performed by Medicine

Wheel; "Hit The Road

Jack" by Percy Mayfield

## 2nd Unit Choreography

Diana Conway

## Supervising Sound Editor

Craig Berkey

## Sound Editors

David Grant

Louis Creveling

Jason Schmid

Fred Howard

Mark Cookson

David Melhase

Danielle Ghent

## Sound Mixer

Rob Young

## ADR Mixers

Derek Marcl

Doc Kane

## Foley Mixer

Steve Jaskowskiak

## Music Scoring Mixers

Jay Rifkin

Alan Meyerson

## ADR Recordist

Mike Boudry

## Sound Re-recording Mixers

John Ross

Joshua Schneider

## Foley Walkers

Catherine Harper

Ossama Khuluki

## Loop

L.A. MadDogs

Mitch Carter

Dennis Tufano

Aryana Shayne

## Cast

Chevy Chase

Jack Sturges

Farrah Fawcett

Sandra Archer

Jonathan Taylor Thomas

Ben Archer

George Wendt

Chet Bronski

David Shiner

Lloyd Small

Art LaFleur

Red Sweeney

Richard Portnow

Joey Renda

Richard Foronjy

Murray

Peter Appel

Tony

Chief Leonard George

Leonard Red Crow

George Greif

Frank Renda

Ron Canada

Bob Younger

Chris Miranda

Hank Sweeney

Zachary Browne

Norman Bronski

Spencer Vrooman

Darryl Small

## Nicholas Garrett

Monroe Hill

Jimmy Baker

Young Ben

John DiSanti

Romeo Costanza

Walter Marsh

Judith Maxie

Judges

Jim Smith

Minister

Sean Orr

Bailiff

Tony Sampson

Shane Meier

Big Kids at School

8,702 feet

97 minutes

## Dolby stereo

In colour

Prints by

Technicolor

low the group to the woods, and Ben overhears them plotting to kill Jack. Jack tells Ben and the others to fetch help while he decoys the heavies, but falls and injures his leg. Ben returns to help him; using their new-found skills they booby-trap Murray and Tony, but are caught by Joey, who is about to kill them when the rest of the group show up and capture the hoods. All the group attend Jack and Sandy's wedding, while Ben muses how well things have turned out.

In the credits, *Man of the House* is billed as a "Forever Girls Production". The name's anything but apt, since this is a Forever Boy Production if ever there was one. Barring one brief bit-part, the sole woman in the cast is Farrah Fawcett, and all she gets to do is flash her teeth, look gauntly sexy and spot-weld the odd lump of metal in the cause of portraying an artist. Male/female relationships, in any case, are largely irrelevant here: father/son bonding is what the movie's about, and once Jack and Ben have got their problems sorted out, it stands to reason that everything will be just fine between Jack and Sandra. So boys must learn to be men, men must get the chance to act like boys, and the compact is sealed (how else?) by heading off into the wilderness and wielding lethal weapons.

In the intervals of all this Junior League Iron-Johnnery, and despite being stuck with a grindingly predictable plot, the film does rack up a few diverting moments. It's best in its earlier reaches, when the abrasion between stepfather and son is at its height: Ben, surveying the newly-installed array of aftershaves and deodorants in the bathroom cabinet, mutters, "What's wrong with the guy - is he decomposing?" There's some neat role reversal too, with the two adults trying to sneak off for some nocturnal nookie, but stopped dead by the appearance of a censorious 11-year-old glaring down from the landing.

Apart from a couple of crudely stuck-on slapstick episodes, most of the humour preserves this drily sardonic tone, to which the cast respond with relish. As Ben, Jonathan Taylor Thomas is likeably uncute, and there's particularly good support from George Wendt (Norman from *Cheers*) and Leonard George, son of Chief Dan George, who's clearly inherited his father's laconic charm. What none of them can overcome, though, is the film's relentlessly didactic intent, culminating in a finale that rams home its trite message ("Sometimes you have to trust people") with all the subtlety of a piledriver on steroids. A couple of years ago the BBC broadcast *Goggle Eyes*, adapted by Deborah Moggach from Anne Fine's novel, which treated an almost identical subject with far more wit and imagination, and infinitely less moralising, not that there's any question of plagiarism. More's the pity; if the makers of *Man of the House* had seen *Goggle Eyes*, it might have improved their film no end.

Philip Kemp

# Miami Rhapsody

USA 1995

Director: David Frankel

## Certificate

15

## Distributor

Buena Vista

## Production Company

Hollywood Pictures

presents

A Cantaloupe

production

## Executive Producers

Jon Avnet

Jordan Kerner

## Producers

Barry Jossen

David Frankel

## Associate Producer

Joe M. Aguilar

## Production Associate

Gena Deslos

## Production Supervisor

Dawn Solér

## Production Co-ordinator

Mark Lafata

## Unit Production Manager

Joe M. Aguilar

## Location Manager

Maria K. Chavez

## Post-production

Co-ordinator

Steven R. Houska

## Assistant Directors

Gary Sales

Melanie Grefé

Polly Ann Mattson

## Casting

Renée Rousselot

Associate:

Susan Wiedner

Miami:

Yonit Hamer

ADR Voice:

Barbara Harris

## Screenplay

David Frankel

## Script Supervisor

Corey B. Yugler

## Director of Photography

Jack Wallner

## Camera/Steadicam

Operator

Gerrit Dangremond

## Opticals

Kenimation

## Editor

Steven Weisberg

## Production Designer

J. Mark Harrington

## Set Decorator

Barbara Peterson



**Cast**  
**Sarah Jessica Parker**  
 Gwyn Marcus  
**Gil Bellows**  
 Matt  
**Antonio Banderas**  
 Antonio  
**Mia Farrow**  
 Nina Marcus  
**Paul Mazursky**  
 Vic  
**Kevin Pollak**  
 Jordan Marcus  
**Barbara Garrick**  
 Terri  
**Carla Gugino**  
 Leslie Marcus  
**Bo Eason**  
 Jeff  
**Naomi Campbell**  
 Kaia  
**Jeremy Piven**  
 Mitchell  
**Kelly Bishop**  
 Zelda  
**Mark Blum**  
 Peter  
**Norman Steinberg**  
 Charlie

**Ben Stein**  
 Rabbi  
**Donal Logue**  
 Derek  
**Mary Chernoff**  
 Grandma Lil  
**Elodia Rivega**  
 Antonio's Mother  
**Chaz Mena**  
 Ted  
**George Tapia**  
 Carlos  
**Avery Sommers**  
 Nurse  
**Ed Arenas**  
 Photographer  
**Frank Fong**  
 Chinese Host  
**Lisa Banes**  
 Gynecologist

**8,560 feet**  
**95 minutes**

**Original Running Time**  
**Dolby stereo**  
**In colour**  
**Technicolor**

Gwyn Marcus, an advertising copywriter living in Miami, tells her analyst about her family and her love life...

Gwyn has accepted a marriage proposal from her zoologist boyfriend Matt. She attends the wedding of her sister Leslie to Jeff, a pro footballer with the Miami Dolphins. At the reception, Gwyn's father Vic tells her that he is convinced her mother Nina is having an affair. Later, Nina admits to Gwyn that she is involved with Antonio, the Cuban nurse who is looking after Gwyn's stroke-afflicted grandmother. Nina tells her how the affair began, with a night out at a Cuban restaurant and a visit to his apartment.

Visiting her brother Jordan, Gwyn finds him in rowing with his pregnant wife Terri, who has learned that he is having an affair with Kaia, the model wife of his business partner. He tells Gwyn how the affair started. Gwyn runs into Antonio, and they discuss his affair with Nina. She tells Nina that she and Matt have set the wedding date, but that she is reluctant to sacrifice her own identity. Nina confesses that she finds Antonio too passionate, and that things are now going better with Vic. At her office, Gwyn learns that she has lost one of her clients, who thinks that, as a woman, she will want to leave work and have children.

In a Chinese restaurant, Gwyn encounters a distraught Zelda, a travel agent that Nina has always suspected Vic of having an affair with. Vic admits that he is, but says that he now feels trapped in the relationship and is in love with Nina again.

Gwyn visits Jordan and Kaia, now living together, but in a state of conflict. She returns to her apartment to find Leslie using her bed to make love to an old school friend, Mitchell; Leslie tells her how they met. Panicked by all these revelations, Gwyn calls off her engagement. Antonio is expecting a visit from his mother, who wants to see him with a girlfriend; he asks Gwyn to pose in the role, and he takes her for a wild night on the town.

Gwyn's coveted project, a sitcom script, has been accepted by a producer

friend of Vic's. Matt tells her he has been accepted for a new job in Zaire, and that their romance is over. Meanwhile, Leslie and Jeff split up, Jordan and Terri begin a tentative reconciliation, and Vic and Nina are getting on well. Antonio accompanies Gwyn to Orlando for her script meeting; they are about to make love, but her anxiety stands in the way. Nina phones to tell Gwyn her grandmother has died. At the funeral, Jordan learns that Terri has given birth to a baby girl; in hospital, they are finally reconciled. In her analyst's office, Gwyn philosophises about love, life and Miami.

David Frankel's high-gloss comedy of manners pulls off a neat balancing trick, providing brittle urban humour on one hand, and on the other a mood every bit as opulent and romantic as the title suggests. Much of the film's appeal comes from the way that the setting, with its rather factitious tropical sultriness, offsets the characters' angst-driven verbals. Cynically down-to-earth on one hand, lushly overwrought on the other, the film makes for an odd hybrid: *Miami Witz*.

Learning that both her parents are having affairs, Gwyn laments, "It's not the norm. It's not L.A." But it's not quite Miami either: David Frankel's setting is a non-specific fantasy land that allows the writer-director to create a particular comic style, blending the traditional pessimism of Jewish humour with the escapism of what could best be called Jewison humour. Not a few moments of *Miami Rhapsody* suggest that director's *Moonstruck*, with palms replacing pizzas.

Most of all, though, this Miami resembles a particularly well-heeled district of Woody Allen's Manhattan, and at times, the parallels are so glaring as to seem careless. Most obvious is the casting of Mia Farrow, too obtrusively WASPy to make a convincing mother to Sarah Jessica Parker's engagingly wisecracking heroine. There's a narrative comprising overlapping tales of romantic disaster, recounted - ostensibly by Gwyn, then by her family and friends - in a series of voice-overs and flashbacks between flashbacks. There's also the use of a sumptuous mainstream jazz soundtrack to counterpoint the narrative's cynical undertow - for every small-time betrayal or moment of disillusion, a swathe of Gershwin or Ellington sugars the pill. Charming though the film is, it's charming in the way that lighter Allen films are, and we're likely to be distracted counting the echoes. The family saga structure resembles a looser, more wholeheartedly comic variant of *Hannah and Her Sisters*, while the story about Gwyn's father and his mistress seems to be decanted straight from the Martin Landau-Angelica Huston relationship in *Crimes and Misdemeanors*.

Consequently the film comes off as a rather disjointed set of anecdotal sequences and one-liners that result in something of a sitcom feel. (Frankel is, in fact, best known for his television work, directing and writing the CBS



**Sob sister: Sarah Jessica Parker**

series *Grapevine*). Frankel lays on the life-lessons with a commendably light touch and manages to avoid the sentiment that US sitcoms and romantic comedies invariably fall prey to. There are even some good visual gags. Best of all is the moment when Jordan visits Kaia on a photo shoot. The camera describes besotted circles around Naomi Campbell; just as Kevin Pollak comes into view in the crowd of onlookers, she takes off her top, and he collapses in a dead faint.

As for Miami, city resident Frankel is scrupulous in giving us an exhaustive tour of real locations, from the Zoo to the Beach to Coconut Grove, and cinematographer Jack Wallner contrives a high-gloss look that makes the city as intensely tropical as it's ever been on film: searing neons, hot oranges and greens, interiors decked in jungle vegetation wallpaper. The atmosphere, though, is more tangible than the city itself, which remains an idea, a luxury playpen for the characters to enjoy their troubles in.

It's when Frankel attempts to deal with the Hispanic Miami that he comes unstuck. Despite an attempt in the script to defuse these middle-class Jewish ladies' romantic misconceptions about 'dangerous' Antonio, the evenings that Gwyn and Nina spend with him are straight out of the absurd salsa-and-seduction fantasy of *The Mambo Kings* - another film featuring Antonio Banderas, who seems to have become Hollywood's rent-a-fake-Cuban. Nina and he don't simply go out for a meal, they go to a wild nightspot where he, naturally, gets up and jams with the band on congas. The most stereotypical note is Antonio's over-protective, bustling mother, who simply wants to see him with a nice girl - something of a Hispanisation of the Jewish mother joke.

The rather smug depiction of an enclosed, incestuous circle is redeemed by some memorably absurd moments: notably Leslie and Jeff's awful dippy wedding ritual, with their personalised touches of doggerel - "Will you love him in a boat, and will you love him on a float?" - and ample jokes about nose jobs and dentistry. And the cast - with the exception of Naomi Campbell and her transatlantic Mick Jagger diction - is uniformly excellent. Sarah Jessica Parker makes a galvanisingly prickly centre to it all, in her best turn since *L.A. Story*. If this isn't the film that makes her a star on celluloid, at the very least she'll get her own sitcom series - a *Rhoda* with de luxe cocktails.

**Jonathan Romney**

## A Simple Twist of Fate

USA 1994

Director: Gillies MacKinnon

**Certificate**  
 PG  
**Distributor**  
 Buena Vista  
**Production Company**  
 Touchstone Pictures  
**Executive Producer**  
 Steve Martin  
**Producer**  
 Ric Kidney  
**Associate Producer**  
 Karen Snow  
**Production Co-ordinator**  
 Alison Fibbon  
**Unit Production Manager**  
 Marty Ewing  
**Location Manager**  
 Richard Klotz  
**2nd Unit Director**  
 Ric Kidney  
**Assistant Directors**  
 Vebe Borge  
 Christopher Swartout  
 Peter Herman  
**Casting**  
 Dianne Critten  
 Atlanta:  
 Chez Casting  
 Shay Griffin  
**Screenplay**  
 Steve Martin  
 Suggested by the novel *Silas Marner* by George Eliot  
**Script Supervisor**  
 Patience Thoreson  
**Director of Photography**  
 Andrew Dunn  
**2nd Unit Photography**  
 Paul Pollard  
**Camera Operators**  
 Paul Varrierur  
 2nd Unit:  
 Paul Pollard  
 Ed Myers  
**Visual Effects**  
 Buena Vista  
 Visual Effects  
 Supervisor:  
 Peter Montgomery  
 Producer:  
 Carolyn Soper  
**Opticals**  
 Buena Vista Imaging  
**Matte Artist**  
 Paul Lasaine  
**Editor**  
 Humphrey Dixon  
**Production Designer**  
 Andy Harris  
**Art Director**  
 Tim Galvin  
**Set Design**  
 Julie Sanford  
 Jonathan Short  
**Set Decorator**  
 Maria Nay  
**Scenic Artist**  
 Steve Kerlagon  
**Special Effects Supervisor**  
 Thomas R. Ward  
**Costume Design**  
 Hope Hanafin  
**Wardrobe Supervisor**  
 Cheryl Kilbourne  
 Kimpton  
**Make-up**  
 Judy Ponder-Patton  
 Frank Griffin  
**Hairstylists**  
 G. Phillip Ivey  
 Toni-Ann Walker  
**Title Design**  
 Nina Saxon  
 Film Design  
**Music**  
 Cliff Eidelman  
**Music Performed by**  
 The L.A. Master Chorale  
 Soloist:  
 Bobbi Page  
 Ewi Solos:  
 Nyle Steiner  
 Judd Miller

**Music Conductor**  
 Cliff Eidelman  
**Orchestrations**  
 Mark McKenzie  
**Music Supervisor**  
 James Oliverio  
**Music Editor**  
 Scott Stambler  
**Songs/Music Extracts**  
 "Past Three O'Clock" performed by The Young Singers of Callanwolde Choir;  
 "I Need a New Lover Tonight" by Bobby Marsh, Jerry Marsh, performed by Catch 22;  
 "Running Bear" by J.P. Richardson, performed by Johnny Preston;  
 "It's Much Too Late" by Allen Bunn, Morris Levy, Clarence Lewis, performed by The Grady 'Fats' Jackson Band; "When I Take My Sugar to Tea" by Sammy Fain, Irving Kahal, Pierre Norman, performed by Terry Glenn Harper; "Louie, Louie" by Richard Berry; "Matilda, Matilda" by Norman Span; "The Horses Brattle" by Thoinot Arbeau; "Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major (The Prelude)" by Johann Sebastian Bach; "Sonata No. 3 in C Major" by Franz Joseph Haydn; "Red is the Rose"  
**Supervising Sound Editor**  
 Fred Judkins  
**Sound Editors**  
 Paul Berolzheimer  
 Sue Midgley  
 Stewart Nelsen  
 Robert L. Sephton  
 Scott Weber  
 C.T. Welch  
**ADR Editor**  
 Avram Gold  
**Sound Mixer**  
 Mary H. Ellis  
**Music Mixer**  
 Armin Steiner  
**ADR Mixers**  
 Doc Kane  
 Reilly Steele  
 Kelly Cole  
**Foley Mixer**  
 David Gertz  
**Music Recordist**  
 Bill Easystone  
**Sound Re-recording Mixers**  
 John Reitz  
 Dave Campbell  
 Gregg Rudloff  
**Foley Artists**  
 James Moriana  
 Jeffrey Wilhoit  
**Loop Group**  
 L.A. MadDogs  
 Mitch Carter  
**Polo Technical Adviser**  
 Adolphus B.  
 Orthwein Jr  
**Stunt Co-ordinator**  
 Webster Whinery

**Cast**  
**Steve Martin**  
 Michael McCann  
**Gabriel Byrne**  
 John Newland  
**Laura Linney**  
 Nancy Newland  
**Catherine O'Hara**  
 Mrs Simon  
**Alana Austin**  
 Mathilda McCann,  
 age 10



**Alyssa Austin**  
Mathilda McCann,  
age 5  
**Alaina Mobley**  
Callie Mobley  
Mathilda McCann,  
age 3  
**Victoria Evans**  
Elizabeth Evans  
Mathilda McCann  
as a Baby  
**Stephen Baldwin**  
Tanny Newland  
**Byron Jennings**  
Keating  
**Michael des Barres**  
Bryce  
**Tim Ware**  
Rob  
**David Dwyer**  
Joe the Bartender  
**Tom Even**  
Dad the Cop  
**Ed Grady**  
Judge Marcus  
**Amelia Campbell**  
Marsha Swanson  
**Danny Nelson**  
Dr Roberts  
**Kellen Crosby**  
Lawrence, age 11  
**Adam Crosby**  
Lawrence, age 8  
**Chase Conner**  
Lawrence, age 5  
**Carolyn McCormick**  
Elaine McCann  
**Terry Loughlin**  
Cal  
**Eric Brooks**  
Butler  
**Leon Lamar**  
Stablehand  
**Shauna Leigh Austin**  
D.C. Teacher  
**Suzanne Stewart**  
Judge's Wife

**Dan Chandler**  
Cop  
**Deborah Duke**  
Esther  
**Michelle Benjamin-Cooper**  
Teacher  
**Muriel Moore**  
Mrs Latham  
**Boyce Holleman**  
Judson Vaughn  
Politicians  
**Afemo Omilami**  
Bailiff  
**Janell McLeod**  
Court Stenographer  
**Mary Ann Hagan**  
Girl at Polo Game  
**Kathrin Nicholson**  
TV Reporter  
**D. Henderson Baker**  
TV Cameraman  
**Mary Nell Santacrose**  
Ric Reitz  
Social Workers  
**Libby Whittemore**  
Playgroup Mom  
**Scott Higgs**  
Summons Server  
**Pamela Fitch**  
Mathilda's Pal  
**Stephanie Astalos-Jones**  
Parent  
**Don Young**  
Graveyard Worker  
**Jon Kohler**  
Janitor  
**Miss Lori**  
Marty  
Mathilda's Dog

**9.578 feet**  
**106 minutes**

**Dolby stereo**  
**In colour**  
**Prints by**  
**Technicolor**

Divorced after learning that the child he was to have with his former wife was another man's, cabinet maker Michael McCann has moved to dark house near a small Virginian town, withdrawn into himself and become a miser hoarding gold coins. Local politician John Newland has a troublesome brother, Tanny, given to public carousing, and a secret illegitimate daughter whose mother is a drug addict. Tanny is John's go-between with the mother, but on the eve of election night, he has an accident in John's car and a girl he picked up is drowned. Needing to make a quick getaway, he sneaks into McCann's house and steals the gold coins.

On election night, the strung out junkie mother, having waited in vain for Tanny to arrive with her money, tries to drive to John's palatial home, but runs out of petrol in a snowstorm. She staggers with the toddler to within a few feet of Michael McCann's place before collapsing. The toddler finds her own way to a seat in front of Michael's fire but he finds the mother frozen to death. Michael sees the child's coming as a sign and decides to adopt her. John Newland uses his influence to see that he succeeds. Michael names the child Mathilda and the responsibility brings him out of himself.

When Mathilda is 10, Michael takes her with him to the Newland house to deliver a cabinet. John has the career he wanted but he and his wife Nancy have failed to produce a child and seeing Mathilda causes him increasing heartache. He invites her up to ride his horses and confesses to Nancy that Mathilda is his natural child. They

decide to try and gain custody of her through the courts. The combination of political influence and expensive advocacy looks certain to win for the Newland's, despite Mathilda's brilliant staging of a fake breakdown to sway Judge Marcus' sympathy Michael's way. Marcus says that it is only the opportunities offered by the Newland's wealth which make the difference but his decision is interrupted by a discovery that changes everything. In having the quarry pumped dry to form a lake for their new home elsewhere, The Newlands have uncovered Tanny's corpse with all of Michael's gold coins on him, therefore Judge Marcus decides against the Newlands. John and Mathilda, however, remain on good terms.

A better name for this film might be *Several Complicated Twists of Fate* as the chances of having a complete collection of gold coins stolen on the same night that a girl is nearly drowned nearby in a politician's car are remote enough – without having an infant appear out of a snowstorm at your fireside on the following night leading you to find her junkie mother frozen to death. This is the fairytale-like premise, borrowed from George Eliot's *Silas Marner*, for a film that remains semi-realist throughout. Yet Steve Martin's script seems to acknowledge that an excess of Victorian melodramatic event has occurred in its first phase, and is resolutely determined from that point onwards to be as character-driven and action-free as a script performed by an actor chiefly known for his talent in slapstick can possibly be.

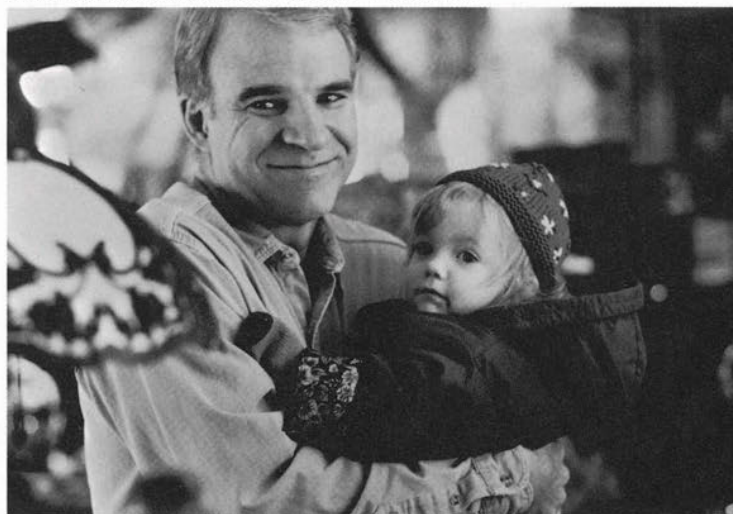
This it does with intermittent success. As in most films that have to show several stages in a child's life, scenes describing the intervening years of Mathilda's growth between her mother's death and her crucial tenth year have a water-treading feel about them, as if their only true function is to show that Michael McCann is a wonderful dad and Mathilda a well brought-up girl. They do allow, however, for many of the film's more quirky moments, shot with a child's sense of wonderment; in particular, the scenes of Steve Martin dangling from an old weather balloon and his

later use of it to save Mathilda from falling into the local quarry, which turns into an epiphanic moment.

It is in these more offbeat and incidental scenes that Gillies Mackinnon's touch becomes recognisably that of the director of *The Grass Arena* and *Playboys*. Behind an often sentimental surface, Mackinnon sets a sombre and gritty undertone of mood that suggests the force of Michael McCann's hurt, to which Steve Martin can only hold a tight mask and which grants Gabriel Byrne's more relaxed performance an extra poignancy. When elements of Martin's comedy persona leak through in playing with Mathilda, a lack of control becomes more apparent – sometimes its appropriate and in character, other times it would be possible to insert the entire scene into *Parenthood*. Such disjunctures would appear to be inherent in Martin's attempt at creating a serious role for himself. His script wants to redeem a self-pitying miser and a forlorn political opportunist without recourse to sentiment and still contain such snappy wisecracks as computer hacker Mrs Simons' remark: "I can flush the Vatican toilet if I want to", into the bargain.

A *Simple Twist of Fate's* barrier to success may be its ambitiousness. A fairy tale cannot easily contain a modern debate about paternal rights any more than a biblical parable can afford to hedge its bets. *Simple Twist* has attributes of both forms but it never satisfactorily resolves them into a coherent whole. Characterisation is also perhaps too subtle. Each time we learn to like one incarnation of Mathilda, she puts on a few years and we have to start again. Since Michael remains a reticent figure throughout, despite his apparent reflowering under the influence of raising Mathilda, the only constantly compelling character is Newland, a fact which puts a spin of divided loyalties into the climactic court case, but which also undermines the idea that Michael is over his trauma. Michael's tragedy from the beginning is that he's been outdone by a more handsome man, and the suspicion remains that the court's decision may yet be reversed in a putative future by his own self-pity.

Nick James



Waltzing Mathilda: Steve Martin

## Six Degrees of Separation

USA 1994

Director: Fred Schepisi

**Certificate**  
15  
**Distributor**  
Warner Bros  
**Production Company**  
Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer presents  
A Maiden Movies  
New Regency  
Production  
**Executive Producer**  
Ric Kidney  
**Producers**  
Fred Schepisi  
Arnon Milchan  
**Associate Producer**  
Mary Pat Walsh  
**Production Co-ordinator**  
Pamela Hochscharner  
**Unit Production Manager**  
Chris Brigham  
**Location Manager**  
Amy Herman  
**Post-production Supervisor**  
Felicity Nove  
**Assistant Directors**  
Amy Sayers  
Donald J. Lee Jr  
Bill Connor  
**Casting**  
Ellen Chenoweth  
Associate:  
Jill Greenberg Sands  
Voice:  
Barbara Harris  
**Screenplay**  
John Guare  
Based on his play  
**Script Supervisors**  
Dianne Dreyer  
Kay Chapin  
**Director of Photography**  
Ian Baker  
**Camera Operator**  
Craig Haagensen  
**Steadicam Operators**  
Kyle Rudolph  
Anastas N. Michos  
**Editor**  
Peter Honess  
**Production Designer**  
Patrizia von Brandenstein  
**Art Director**  
Dennis Bradford  
**Set Decorator**  
Gretchen Rau  
**Set Dressers**  
Michael L. Benson  
Nancy Boytos-Amanuel  
**Scenic Artists**  
Master:  
Jon Ringbom  
Camera:  
Peter G. Hackman  
June DeCamp  
**Costume Design**  
Judianna Makovsky  
**Wardrobe Supervisors**  
Ingrid Price  
Jane Myers  
**Make-up Design**  
Naomi Donne  
**Hair Design**  
Bruno Pattini  
**Hairstylist**  
Angel De Angelis  
**Title Design**  
Alex Stitt  
**Opticals**  
Cinevex Film  
Laboratories:  
Christopher Sturgeon  
Ian Sheath  
**Music**  
Jerry Goldsmith  
**Music Performed by**  
The Victorian  
Philharmonic  
Orchestra of Melbourne  
**Music Conductor**  
Jerry Goldsmith  
**Music Editor**  
Kenneth Hall

**Songs/Music Extracts**  
"Just One of Those Things" by Cole Porter;  
"The Very Thought of You" by Ray Noble;  
"Blue Tango" by Leroy Anderson, Mitchell Parish; "Try To Remember" by Harvey Schmidt;  
"The American" Quartet in #6 in F Major Op.96 by Antonin Dvorak;  
"The Bridal Chorus from *Lohengrin* by Richard Wagner;  
"Quartet in G Minor Op 10 by Claude Debussy; "Trio" OP.99 2nd Movement by Franz Schubert; "Swan Lake" (Ballet) by Peter Tchaikovsky  
**Supervising Sound Editor**  
Peter Burgess  
**Dialogue Editor**  
Livia Ruzic  
**Supervising ADR Editor**  
Terry Rodman  
**ADR Editors**  
Penn Robinson  
Jeanine Chialvo  
**Sound Mixer**  
Bill Daly  
**Re-recording Mixers**  
Peter Fenton  
Martin Oswin  
**Sound Effects Editor**  
Glenn Newnham  
**Foley**  
Gerard Long  
Steve Burgess

**Cast**  
Stockard Channing  
Ouisa Kittredge  
Will Smith  
Paul  
Donald Sutherland  
Flan Kittredge  
Ian McKellen  
Geoffrey  
Mary Beth Hurt  
Kitty  
Bruce Davison  
Larkin  
Richard Masur  
Doctor Fine  
Anthony Michael Hall  
Trent  
Heather Graham  
Elizabeth  
Eric Thal  
Rick  
Anthony Rapp  
Ben  
Osgood Perkins  
Woody  
Catherine Kellner  
Tess  
Jeffrey Abrams  
Doug  
Joe Pentangelo  
Police Officer  
Lou Milione  
Hustler  
Brooke Hayward Duchin  
Connie  
Peter Duchin  
Sandy  
Sam Stoneburger  
Carter  
Maeve McGuire  
Polly  
Kelly Bishop  
Adele  
John Cunningham  
John  
Vasek Simek  
Frank the Doorman  
Chuck Close  
Andy  
Kazuko  
Jeannie



Adele Chatfield-Taylor  
Paula  
Maggie Burke  
Edmond Genest  
Michael Stanley Kirby  
Loft Party Guests  
David Callegari  
Art Dealer  
Daniel Von Borgen  
Detective  
John Rowe  
Usher  
Elizabeth Rossa  
Bride  
Diane Hartford  
Julia  
Frank O'Brien  
Eddie  
Ann McDonough  
Teacher  
Jose Rabelo  
Elevator Man  
Todd Alcott  
Joanna Noble  
Concert Goers  
Miriam Fond  
Nurse  
Annie Meisels  
Doug's Girls  
Mitch Kolpan  
Policeman  
Michele Greco  
Workman  
Tony Zazula  
Rainbow Room Captain  
Arthur McGill  
Hansom Cab Driver  
Susan Tabor  
Paul Schmidt  
Posh Couple

Carolyn Groves  
Jeannine Moore  
Tim Saunders  
David Tice  
Cocktail Party Guests  
Redman Maxfield  
Fred  
Margaret Eginton  
Mary  
Margaret Thomson  
Grandmother at  
Baptism  
Vince O'Brien  
Grandfather at Baptism  
Anne Swift  
Richmond Hoxie  
Guests at Baptism  
Kitty Carlisle Hart  
Mrs Bannister  
Madhur Jaffrey  
Guest of Honour  
Arthur Brooks  
Jacqueline Bertrand  
Lisa Crosby  
Nancy Duerr  
Brian McConnachie  
Angela Thornton  
Robert Trumbull  
Richard Whiting  
Mrs Bannister's Guests  
Cleo King  
Lieutenant Price  
10,051 feet  
111 minutes  
Dolby stereo  
In colour  
Deluxe  
Anamorphic

Early morning. Flan and Ouisa Kittredge scurry around their New York apartment, as if they have just been burgled. Later that day, at a wedding out of town, the Kittredges tell some fellow guests an amazing story. We flash back to the previous evening. They are entertaining their wealthy South African friend, Geoffrey. They're making small talk when Paul, a smartly dressed young black man who claims to know their children, stumbles into the apartment, saying he has just been mugged in Central Park.

They patch up Paul's stab wound and invite him to stay for dinner. He proves delightful company. First, he cooks them a delicious meal and then he spins a yarn about being Sidney Poitier's son. They believe his every word. Before heading off to his hotel, Geoffrey makes arrangements to give Flan the loan he needs. Flan is so pleased he insists Paul spend the night. But when the Kittredges wake up the next morning, they hear noises from his room. Paul is in bed with a male prostitute. Outraged, they evict both men from the apartment.

A few days later, the Kittredges meet their old friends, Kitty and Larkin, and discover they too were conned by Paul. So was Dr Fine, an obstetrician. All Paul's victims have one thing in common - their children are at college together. The police can do nothing: Paul has committed no crime. The children learn that Paul is a hustler who was picked up off the street by their friend, Trad Conway. In return for sexual favours, Conway taught Paul all about his wealthy friends.

A distraught young woman appears at the apartment block. A few days previously, she and her boyfriend met Paul in Central Park. He told them a story about being Flan's illegitimate son. They believed him and gave him a

place to stay. He stole their savings and seduced the boyfriend, who later committed suicide. When the woman learns the truth, she wants to press charges against him. The police now have a case.

Paul is still at large. One evening, he telephones just as Ouisa is changing for dinner. She encourages him to give himself up to the police. He agrees on condition she delivers him into their hands. But she and Flan are caught up in the traffic. By the time they reach the meeting place, the cops, tipped off, have already made the arrest. Not long afterwards. The Kittredges are at a smart lunch. Ouisa, realising she doesn't even know Paul's real name, tells the rest of the guests that she read of a prison suicide that morning, and is sure it was him. They scoff at her. She leaves the meal in disgust.

*Six Degrees Of Separation* invites two, very different responses. On the one hand, it is a brilliantly observed, precious little comedy about a clique of wealthy New Yorkers who are only too pleased to have been duped by a young black man claiming to be Sidney Poitier's son. (Outside fine art and money, it is implied, they have nothing much to talk about anyway.) On the other, it is an allegory excoriating race, class and everything else which divides contemporary America. Its strength is its weakness: it is nothing if not smart. John Guare's screen adaptation of his own Broadway hit play crackles with ideas and witty dialogue. Arguably, though, it is too brittle to do justice to the weighty themes it broaches.

"This paltry thing - our life - he wanted it," Ouisa Kittredge observes to her husband when he complains about her fascination with the imposter. But there is very little paltry about the Kittredges. They're glamorous, middle-aged urbanity personified. If Guare is implying that there's a certain, gaping superficiality about their lifestyle, it is portrayed as highly desirable for all that. They're society aesthetes who spend their days chattering with one another and with friends at a series of swanky functions. Gossip is at the heart of their existence: the way the narrative unfolds, with flashbacks and jumps forward as the Kittredges recount events to various different audiences, reinforces the sense that we're in the realm of anecdote and makes the implicitly tragic ending all the more jarring. Even the title, with its insistence that "everybody on this planet is separated by only six other people," sounds like a conversational gambit at a dinner party. And there's always an element of contrivance about what are supposed to be the film's most seismic moments.

The film's central metaphor is also a little clumsy. The Kittredges' favourite possession is a double-sided Kandinsky painting which depicts "chaos and control". Paul, the con artist, represents the former while the couple embody the latter, but the deck is stacked against him. Events are seen almost



Urbanity personified: Donald Sutherland

entirely from the Kittredges' perspective. Gay, black, from the underclass, Paul is regarded less as a character than as an 'exotic other,' a catalyst to stimulate their imaginations and consciences. "Everybody's a phoney," he tells them as he launches on his brilliant, plagiarised monologue linking Salinger's *A Catcher In The Rye* to Mark Chapman, John Hinckley and the corruption of American life. The Kittredges briefly recognise that they and their society pals are as fraudulent as he is, but this isn't a revelation they or the movie take much interest in.

Just occasionally, the satire hits home. John Guare and director Fred Schepisi set out to show how the lives of seemingly unrelated characters briefly intersect. There's a scene in which the Kittredges' friends, Larkin and Kitty, spot the body of a suicide on the street on their way out of a roller skating disco. They react complacently - death is something they see every day - unaware that the boy has killed himself because of Paul, and indirectly, because of them. It is all too apparent how cosseted these wealthy New Yorkers are. Their apartments are virtual fortresses. Their class system, with its rigid code of behaviour, is impenetrable to outsiders, and their consciences are closed to everything that happens beyond their orbit.

Perhaps *Six Degrees Of Separation* isn't the most trenchant allegory ever made but it's a wonderful piece of storytelling. With unlikely incident layered upon unlikely incident, it achieves a bizarre, dreamlike quality reminiscent of one of those Buñuel satires in which the dinner party never ends and the bourgeois idyll turns into a nightmare. It's a talkative affair - all the dialogue from Guare's original play seems to survive intact - but its sudden shifts in time and location, and its determinedly elliptical structure, are probably more suited to cinema than stage. Stockard Channing, everybody's favourite character turn from *Grease*, and Donald Sutherland make a fine comic double-act as the archetypal smart New Yorkers while Will Smith, television's *Fresh Prince Of Bel Air*, shows just the right measure of charisma and vulnerability as the con artist. Given Fred Schepisi's track record - *The Chant Of Jimmy Blacksmith*, *A Cry In The Dark* - the director might have been expected to strike a more sombre note. Instead, he foregrounds the comedy. As a result, the film is a dazzling but determinedly superficial affair.

Geoffrey Macnab

## Tank Girl

USA 1995

Director: Rachel Talalay

Certificate

15

Distributor

UIP

Production Company

United Artists Pictures

presents

A Trilogy

Entertainment Group

Production

Executive Producers

Aron Warner

Tom Astor

Producers

Richard B. Lewis

Pen Densham

John Watson

Co-producer

Christian L. Rehr

2nd Unit Production

Supervisor

Cathy Gibson

Production Co-ordinator

Susan P. McCarthy

Unit Production Manager

Michael Polaire

Location Manager

Charles Harrington

2nd Unit Director

Peter Ramsey

Assistant Directors

Mike Topoozian

Gregory Kent Simmons

Bob Wagner

Tony Schwartz

2nd Unit:

George Fortmuller

Doug Raine

James Cohen

Casting

Pam Dixon Mickelson

Voice:

Barbara Harris

Screenplay

Tedi Sarafian

Based on the comic

strip created by Alan

Martin, Jamie Hewlett

Script Supervisors

Kay B. Sweeney

2nd Unit:

Sibylle Aldridge

Director of Photography

Gale Tattersall

2nd Unit Director

of Photography

Mike Benson

Camera Operators

Michael Genne

2nd Unit:

Allan Easton

Steadicam Operator/

B Camera

Chris Haarhoff

Video Displays

Video Image

Visual Effects Supervisor

Peter Crosman

Visual Effects Co-ordinator

Rochelle Gross

Visual Effects Consultants

4-Ward Productions Inc

Supervisor:

Robert Skotak

Producer:

Elaine Edford

Director of

Photography:

Dennis Skotak

Editor:

Amy L.C. Pawlowski

Model Supervisor:

Jim Towler

Mechanical Effects:

Ian O'Connor

Miniature Mechanical

Supervisor:

Joel Steiner

Camera Operator:

John Paszkiewicz

Production

Co-ordinators:

Kathy Draper

Janette Shew

Model Builders:

James Cook

Jorge Fuentes

Howard Harnett

Glen McAdam

Matte Painter:

Rick Rische

Digital Compositing

525 Post Production:

Helena Packer

Peter Abraham

Additional:

Digital Film Group/

The Post Group

Mark Franco

Richard Mann

Cosmas Paul Bolger Jnr

Peter Sternlicht

Karen Skouras

Chris Kutcka

Opticals

Hollywood Optical

Special Visual Effects/

Screen Graphics

VFX:

Rhonda C. Gunner

Gregory L. McMurry

Richard E. Hollander

John C. Wash

Producer:

Scott Peterson

Crew:

Jerry Pao

James Bancroft

Susan Kornfeld

Scott Giegler

Dan Dobson

Greg Kozikowski

Edwin Rivera

Animated Visual

Effects/Composites

Available Light Limited

Animators:

John T. Van Vliet

January Nordman

Producer:

Katherine Kean

Optical:

Beverly Bernacki

Digital:

Bob Lyss

Editor:

Dana Desselle

Animation Camera:

Joseph Thomas

Additional Visual Effects

Pacific Ocean Post

Digital Film

Additional Optical

Roto FX of America

Chris Casady

Lookout Mountain

Films

Pat O'Neil

Animation Sequences

Colossal Pictures

Designer:

Mike Smith

Producer:

Ashley McGovern

Supervising Animators:

Andrew Knight

Steve Evangelatos

Animators:

Andy Bartlett

Ron Zorman

Paul Chung

Jimmy 'The Mad Dog'

Farrington

Peter 'Woody

Doodley' Candeerland

Mike Burgess

Daniel 'Mad Dog'

Sumich

Background Artist:

James Finn

Ink and Paint:

The Ink Crowd

Holographic Head Sequence

Commotion, Inc

Earl Huddleston

Bob Robbins

Design and Animation:

Jay Mark Johnson

Bertha Garcia

Digital Effects Software

Elastic Reality

Editor

James R. Symons

Additional:

William D. Gordean



**Production Designer**

Catherine Hardwicke

**Art Directors**Phillip Toolin  
Charles D. Lee  
Richard Yanez-Toyon  
Jim Dultz**Set Design**

Lead:

Masako Masuda  
Stephen T. Alsch  
Luis Hoyos**Set Decorator**

Cindy Carr

**Set Dressers**Herb Morris  
Paul E. Penley  
Glen Kennedy**Production Illustrator**

Chris Gorak

**Storyboard Artist**

Peter Ramsey

**Special Effects Co-ordinator**

Ken Pepiot

**Special Effects**

Foremen:

Albert Delgado  
Gintar Repecka  
Crew:R. Drik Dugan  
Kenny Erickson  
Johnny Fontana  
Kelly Kerby

Cody Lee

James Lorimer

Joe B. McCracken

James Nagle

Robert Olmstead

2nd Unit:

Michael Benoit

John Cazin

John B. Hagey

Ralph Hall

Randell Rowlett

**Ripper Design**

Stan Winston Studio

Concept Artist:

Mark 'Crash' McCreery

Key Artists:

Mike Smithson

Scott Stoddard

Kevin McTurk

Kevin Hudson

Nathalie Fratti

Urusla Ward

Bruce Spaulding Fuller

Richard Davison

Eric Ostroff

William Basso

Jason Matthews

Mark Maitre

Stuart Artingstall

Mark Jurinko

Ken Brilliant

Greg Figiel

Constance Grayson

Technical/Mechanical

Department:

Joe Reader

Werner Keppeler

John Gentile

Barry Crane

Jon Neill

John Calpin

Brian Namanny

Glenn Derry

Production

co-ordinator:

Stiles White

Additional Ripper

Make-up Artists:

Rolf Keppeler

Craig Reardon

Brian Penikas

**Ripper Body Armour**

Alterian Studios

Ripper Armour Makers:

Brian Sipe

Dave Smith

Roger Borelli

Tamara Gayle Carlson

Garrett Immel

Lynette Johnson

**Flyer/Special Props**

WKR Productions

Bob Wilcox

Tad Krzanowski

Joseph Wilson

**Tank Manufacturer**

Hollywood Fires

Additional:

Evergreen Ventures

Greg Taylor

Restorations

Adrian Utey,

performed by

Portishead;

"Shipwrecked" by

**Costume Supervisors**

Mike Butler

Gala Autumn

**Make-up**

Key:

Deborah Larsen

Cheri Montesanto

Medcall

Body:

Loretta James-Demasi

2nd Unit:

Meg Brennan

**Additional Special****Make-up Effects**

Lance Anderson

Make-up Design Inc

**Hairstylists**

Key:

Julie Woods

Patti Dehane

2nd Unit:

Anna Sims

**Title Sequences/Title****Animation Design**

Andrew Doucette

**Title Sequences Producer**

Jane Simpson

**Main Title Animation****Photography**

Lumen Productions

**Opticals**

Pacific Title

**Music**

Graeme Revell

**Music Conductor/****Orchestrations**

Tim Simonec

**Music Supervisor**

Bonnie Greenberg

**Supervising Music Editor**

Richard Bernstein

**Music Editor**

John Finklee

**Executive Music****Co-ordinator**

Courtney Love-Cobain

**Music Co-ordinators**

Nora Felder

Marie Snyder

**Songs/Music Extracts**

"Army of Me" by Björk

Gudmundsdottir,

Graham Massey,

performed by Björk

Gudmundsdottir,

Graham Massey,

Nellee Hooper, Marius

De Vries; "Aurora"

by Nina Gordon,

performed by Vercu

Salt; "B-A-B-Y" by Isaac

Hayes, David Porter,

performed by Rachel

Sweet; "Big Gun"

by Ice-T, DJ Ace,

performed by Ice-T;

"Big Time Sensuality"

by Björk

Gudmundsdottir,

Nellee Hooper,

performed by Björk;

"Blank Generation"

by Richard Hell,

performed by Richard

Hell &amp; The Voidoids;

"Bomb" by Gavin

Rossdale, performed

by Bush; "Drown Soda"

by and performed by

Hole; "Disconnected"

by Trevor Keith, Matt

Riddle, performed by

face to face; "Girls U

Want" by Mark

Mothersbaugh, Gerald

Casale, performed

by Devo; "Let's Do It"

by Cole Porter,

performed by Joan Jett,

Paul Westerberg,

featuring Brian Baker;

"Mockingbird Girl"

by Scott Weiland,

Zander Schloss,

Jeff Nolan, performed

by The Magnificent

Bastards, featuring

Scott Weiland;

"Ripper Sole"

by Luke Cresswell,

Steve McNicholas,

performed by Stomp;

"Roads" by Geoff

Barrow, Beth Gibbons,

Adrian Utey,

performed by

Portishead;

"Shipwrecked" by

Roderick Wolgamott,

Anisa Romero, Gordon

Raphael, Todd Robbins,

Ben Ireland, Jon

Davison, Michael Cozzi,

Joseph Howard,

performed by Sky Cries

Mary; "Shove" by Tom

Suzi Gardner, Donita

Sparks, performed

by L7; "Theme from

Shaft" by Isaac Hayes;

"Thief" by Tom

Gorman, Tanya

Donnelly, performed

by Belly; "24" by Dale

Henderson, Gina

Henderson, performed

by Beowulf; "Wild,

Wild Thing" by

Iggy Pop, Eric

Schermerhorn,

performed by Iggy Pop

**Choreographer**

Adam Shankman

**Music Sound Design**

Brian Williams

**Supervising Sound Editors**

Sandy Gendler

Val Kuklowsky

**Dialogue Editors**

Zach Davis

Victor Radulich

Rich Stevens

John O. Wilde

**ADR Editors**

Harry Harris

Victoria Sampson

**Foley Editors**

Fred Burke

Donald Sylvester

**Production Sound Recordist**

Ed Novick

**ADR Mixers**

Charleen Richards

Greg Steele

**ADR Recordists**

Paul Galloway

Tami Treadwell

**Foley Mixers**

David Jobe

Randy Piotroski

**Foley Recordist**

Don Givens

DTS consultant:

Jeff Levison

**Music Scoring Mixer**

Armin Steiner

**Re-recording Mixers**

Matthew Iadarola

Gary Gegan

**Sound Effects Editors**

Noah Blough

Cameron Frankley

Lenny Jennings

Toni Lamberti

Mark R. LaPointe

Bill Van Daalen

**Special Sound Effects**

Alan Howarth

**Special Vocal Effects**

Frank Welker

**Foley Artists**

Ellen Heuer

John Cucci

**Military Technical Adviser**

Lieutenant Colonel

Duncan Wilmore

**Stunt Co-ordinator**

Walter Scott

**Armourer/Weapons****Specialist**

Robert 'Rock' Galotti

**Cast**

Lori Petty

Tank Girl

Ice-T

T-Saint

Naomi Watts

Jet Girl

Don Harvey

Sergeant Small

Jeff Kober

Booga

Reg E. Cathey

DeeTee

Scott Coffey

Donner

Malcolm McBowell

Kesslee

Stacy Linn Ramsower

Sam

Ann Cusack

Sub Girl

Brian Wimmer

Richard

**Iggy Pop**

Rat Face

**Born Robinson**

Model

Billy L. Sullivan

Max

James Hong

Che'tsai

Charles Lucia

Captain Deroche

Harlan Clark

Doug Jones

Ata Scanlan

Alvarez Wortham

Additional Rippers

Rox Witt

Doctor Nikita

Brixton Kames

Pilot

Will Nahoko Strickland

Razor Ray

Charles Robert Harden

Zack

Tom Noga

Foreman

Bo Jesse Christopher

Town

John David Bland

Trooper Wayne

Jo Farkas

Sand Hermit

Stanton Davis

Father

Jillian Balch

Mother

Richard Schiff

Trooper in Trench

Kane Picoy

Chief Gordon

Kelly Kerby

Troopers

Troy Startoni

Jet Pilot

Beth DePatie

Prostitute

Clayton Landey

Guard at Front

Entrance

Roger Bohman

Technician



# Tommy Boy

USA 1995

Director: Peter Segal

## Certificate

PG  
**Distributor**  
 UIP  
**Production Company**  
 Paramount Pictures  
**Executive Producer**  
 Robert K. Weiss  
**Producer**  
 Lorne Michaels  
**Co-producer**  
 Barnaby Thompson  
**Associate Producer**  
 Michael Ewing  
**Production Associate**  
 Eric Newman  
**Production Co-ordinator**  
 Alice Ferrier  
**Production Managers**  
 Grace Gilroy  
**Location Managers**  
 Matthew Hart  
 Toronto:  
 James Powers  
 L.A.:  
 Ned Shapiro  
**2nd Unit Directors**  
 Robert K. Weiss  
 Curtis Petersen  
 T.J. Scott  
**Assistant Directors**  
 John Hockridge  
 Rocco Gismondi  
 Grant Lucibello  
 Laurie Mirsky  
 Ken A. Smith  
 Marcel Saumpure  
 Christopher T. Gerrity  
**Casting**  
 Pamela Basker  
 Canada:  
 Ross Clydesdale  
 Voice:  
 Barbara Harris  
 Associate:  
 Catherine Stroud  
**Screenplay**  
 Bonnie Turner  
 Terry Turner  
**Script Supervisor**  
 Mimi Wolch  
**Director of Photography**  
 Victor J. Kemper  
**2nd Unit Directors of Photography**  
 Toronto:  
 Robert Ryan  
 L.A.:  
 Robert M. Stevens  
**Camera Operator**  
 Harald Ortenburger  
**Editor**  
 William Kerr  
**Production Designer**  
 Stephen J. Lineveaver  
**Art Directors**  
 Alicia Keywan  
 Toronto:  
 Andrew Stern  
**Set Design**  
 Dennis Davenport  
**Set Decorator**  
 Gordon Sim  
**Scenic Artists**  
 Tim Murtion  
 Ian Nemes  
**Storyboard Artist**  
 Kelly Brine  
**Special Effects**  
**Co-ordinators**  
 Michael Kavanagh  
 Mike Vezna  
**Special Effects**  
 Daniel Gibson  
 Nick Lawson  
**Deer Animatronics**  
 Walter Klassen  
**Costume Design**  
 Patti Unger  
**Wardrobe Supervisor**  
 Kim W. Chow  
**Make-up**  
 Irene Kent  
 Inge Klaudi  
**Hairstylist**  
 James D. Brown

## Title Design

Douy Swofford  
**Titles/Opticals**  
 Pacific Title  
**Music**  
 David Newman  
 Michael Muhlfriedel  
 J. Steven Soles  
**Music Conductor / Orchestrations**  
 David Newman  
 Additional Music:  
 Bruce Babcock  
 Chris Boardman  
 Marty Frasu  
 Ralph Grierson  
 Xanmdy Jank  
 Randy Miller  
**Music Supervisor**  
 G. Marg Roswell  
**Music Editors**  
 George A. Martin  
 Tom Villano  
**Songs/Music Extracts**  
 "Silver Naked Ladies" by and performed by Paul Westerberg;  
 "Call on Me" by Bobby Gillespie, Andrew Innes, Robert Young, performed by Primal Scream; "Maniac" by Michael Sembello, Dennis Matkosky;  
 "Ain't too Proud to Beg" by Edward Holland, Norman Whitfield, performed by Louis Price;  
 "What'd I Say" by Ray Charles, performed by Chris Farley, Brian Dennehy; "Amazing Grace" performed by The Pipes and Drums and Military of the King's Own Scottish Borderers;  
 "Wait for the Blackout" by Millar, Burns, Vanian, Gray, Osborn, performed by Goo Goo Dolls; "Crazy" by Willie Nelson, performed by Patsy Cline;  
 "My Hallucination" by Tommy Shaw, Jack Blades, performed by Shaw-Blades;  
 "Air" by Pamela Laws, Nancy Hess, performed by Seven Day Diary; "Superstar" by Bonnie Bramlett, Leon Russell, performed by The Carpenters; "I'm Sorry" by Ronnie Self, Dub Allbritten, performed by Brenda Lee;  
 "Ooh Wow" by Sidney Cooper, performed by Buckwheat Zydeco; "The Future's So Bright I Gotta Wear Shades" by Pat MacDonald, performed by Timbuk 3; "Come on Eileen" by Kevin Rowland, Jim Patterson, Kevin Adams, performed by Dexys Midnight Runners; "It's the End of the World As We Know It (And I Feel Fine)" by John Michael Stipe, William Berry, Peter Buck, Mike Mills, performed by R.E.M.; "Eres tu" by Juan Carlos Calderon, performed by Mecedades; "The Merry Go Round Broke Down" by Cliff Friend, Dave Franklin;  
 "Is Chicago, Is Not Chicago" by Michael Doughty, Mark Degliantoni, Yuval

Gabay, Sebastian Steinberg, performed by Soul Coughing; "My Lucky Day" by Josh Caterer, performed by Smoking Popes; "I Love it Loud (Injected Mix)" (contains sample of "I Know You Got Soul" by Eric Barrier, William Griffin, James Brown, Bobby Byrd, Charles Bobbit, performed by Eric B., Rakim', "Turn it Up" by Gene Simmons, Vincent Cusano, performed by Phunk Junkeez  
**Supervising Sound Editor**  
 Terry Rodman  
**Sound Editors**  
 Pat Bietz  
 Mike Dobie  
 Stephanie Flack  
 Bob O'Brien  
**Dialogue Editors**  
 Gloria D'Alessandro  
 Carin Rogers  
**Supervising ADR Editor**  
 David B. Cone  
**Supervising Foley Editor**  
 Pamela Bentkowsky  
**ADR Editor**  
 Richard Marx  
**Foley Editors**  
 Scott G.G. Haller  
 Thomas Small  
 Jeffrey Payne  
**Sound Mixer**  
 Hank Garfield  
**ADR Mixers**  
 Bob Baron  
 Tom O'Connell  
**Foley Mixer**  
 Randall K. Singer  
**Music Mixer/Recordist**  
 Tim Boyle  
**Sound Re-recording Mixers**  
 Jeffrey J. Haboush  
 Greg P. Russell  
 Kevin E. Carpenter  
**Animal Vocal Effects**  
 Frank Welker  
**Foley Artists**  
 Ken Dufva  
 David Lee Fein  
**Stunt Co-ordinator**  
 Branko Racki

## Cast

**Chris Farley**  
 Tommy Callaghan  
**David Spade**  
 Richard  
**Brian Dennehy**  
 Big Tom  
**Bo Derek**  
 Beverly  
**Dan Aykroyd**  
 Zalinsky  
**Julie Warner**  
 Michelle  
**Sean McCann**  
 Rittenhauer  
**Zach Grenier**  
 Reilly  
**James Blundick**  
 Gilmore  
**Clinton Turnbull**  
 Young Tommy  
**Ryder Britton**  
 Young Richard  
**Paul Greenberg**  
 Skittish Student  
**Graeme Millington**  
**Michael Cram**  
**Dean Marshall**  
**Trent McMullen**  
 Frat Boys  
**Philip Williams**  
 Danny  
**David 'Skippy' Malloy**  
 Sammy

**Roy Lewis**  
 Louis  
**Austin Pool**  
 Obnoxious Bus Kid  
**William Dunlop**  
 R.T.  
**Jack Jessop**  
 Priest  
**Michael Dunston**  
 Singer at Wedding  
**David Hemblen**  
 Archer  
**George Kinamis**  
**Dov Tiefenbach**  
**Mark Zador**  
 Kids at Lake  
**Helen Hughes**  
 Boardroom Woman  
**J.R. Zimmerman**  
 Boardroom Man  
**Robert K. Weiss**  
**Reg Dreger**  
**Lloyd White**  
 'No' Managers  
**David Huband**  
 Gas Attendant  
**Hayley Gibbins**  
 Little Girl at Carnival  
**Julianne Gillies**  
 Brady's Receptionist  
**Addison Bell**  
 Mr Brady  
**Cory Sevier**  
 Boy in Commercial  
**Maria Vaccratsis**  
 Helen  
**Colin Fox**  
 Nelson  
**Lorri Bagley**  
 Woman at Pool  
**Lynn Cunningham**  
 Pretty Hitchhiker  
**David Calderisi**  
 Sven van de Ven  
**Erol Sitahal**  
 'Yes' Executives  
**Marce Strange**  
 Toy Car Executive  
**Michael Ewing**  
 Ticket Agent  
**Adrian Truss**  
**Christopher John**  
 Cops  
**Henry Gomez**  
 Airport Cop  
**Lindsay Leese**  
 Reservationist  
**Camilla Scott**  
 Stewardess  
**Bumby Webb**  
 Large Woman  
**Marilyn Boyle**  
 Woman with Pen  
**Gino Marrocco**  
 Cabbie  
**Gil Filar**  
 Kid in Bank  
**Jonathan Wilson**  
 Marty  
**Sandi Stahlbrand**  
 News Reporter  
**Ron James**  
**Brian Kaulback**  
 Bank Guards  
**Mark Ingram**  
**Jim Codrington**  
 Security Guards  
**Pat Mofatt**  
 Mrs Nelson  
**Raymond Hunt**  
**Robbie Rox**  
**Jerry Schaeffer**  
 Restaurant Regulars  
**Taylor Segal**  
 Flower Girl

**8,735 feet**  
**97 minutes**  
**Dolby stereo**  
**In colour**  
**DeLuxe**



Spit and polish: Chris Farley, David Spade

castic, nerdy clerk at Callaghan Auto Parts who Tommy has known since they were kids. Tommy's father surprises him with a white collar job and office at the plant, and announces that he is going to marry Beverly, a beautiful woman whose mean-spirited son Paul shows up in time for the wedding.

Tommy's father suffers a heart attack at the wedding and dies, sending the plant's refinancing plans into the wastebasket. With losing the business the only alternative, Tommy resolves to put up his inheritance as collateral to the bank, which they accept providing he can sell his company's products on a cross-country sales run accompanied by know-all Richard. A born loser, Tommy spoils more sales than he makes, and he and Richard endure a hellish road trip. Eventually, they succeed in meeting the bank's quota, but return to find the orders tampered with (by Paul, really Beverly's bedmate), and the business doomed. In a last ditch effort, Richard and Tommy, who have now bonded as friends, masquerade as airline stewards to get to Chicago in time to stop Callaghan auto parts from being bought. Beverly and Paul are revealed as con artists, and Tommy saves his family business - and the jobs of 300 employees.

Like a boot camp sending its recruits out into combat, *Saturday Night Live* has been schooling comic actors and embarking them on screen careers for over 17 years, ever since the dubiously talented Chevy Chase left the show after one season and made *Foul Play*. How this is managed business-wise remains something of a mystery since the show has been on the brink of financial and creative collapse for over a decade. With Eddie Murphy's first few glory days and the deathless, graceful film life of Bill Murray as exceptions, SNL alumni have never adapted very well to the movies, although the occasional cash cow (*The Blues Brothers*, *Wayne's World*) has grazed on our movie dollars. This would also seem to be the case with *Tommy Boy*, a small scale stage for the sociopathic flabbiness of Chris Farley and the crackling dryness of David Spade. Both began as standup comics before graduating to SNL, and both were much funnier outside the

repetitive skit format of the show. Here, the two dig into their custom-fit roles like alehouse rats, and the surprise is that however slack, unoriginal and lowbrow-with-a-vengeance *Tommy Boy* may be, it's a masterwork of sharp comic timing compared to *Billy Madison*, *It's Pat*, *The Coneheads* or nearly any film starring Chase, Joe Piscopo or Jim Belushi.

The weight under which *Tommy Boy* must labour is its by-the-numbers, save-the-orphanage plot; why Hollywood decides to showcase performers like Farley and Spade and then saddle them with the dullest, most sanctimonious of feelgood storylines is a mystery for the ages. Better to simply dispense with the concept of plot altogether, as the intermittently amusing *Wayne's World* movies have done. Still, *Tommy Boy*'s perhaps unwitting proximity to the pop socialism of *Roger and Me* - complete with evil magnates, desolated factory town, and the notion of jobs being kept irrespective of profit - may raise a few eyebrows, as will its view of ruthless salesmanship as a virtuous ideal. It's a film run through with unconscious revelations, even in its casting (Derek as a smarmy gold-digger, Ackroyd as a mendacious millionaire).

Given the unambitious nature of the material, Farley and Spade are very funny as, respectively, the world's crassest schmuck and the world's prickliest smartass. Farley approximates Lou Costello with his hellbent fat man schtick; he doesn't do much besides smack his head into things and blabber nonsense, but he's adept at it. Spade, on the other hand, need do no more than blink his eyes and put a little pepper on lines like "Did you eat a lot of paint chips when you were a kid?" to come off like a hilarious Generation X version of George Sanders. Truly, an appreciation of *Tommy Boy* is largely contingent on a fondness for crisply-timed and sometimes alarming physical gags. Like most comedy films, it is a matter of fancy, and the fancy in question may be directly proportional to the amount of lager consumed beforehand. Even so, if you were tickled by Hugh Grant's buffoonery in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, check out Farley to see a master at work.

Mike Atkinson



# Who's the Man?

USA 1993

Director: Ted Demme

## Certificate

tbc

## Distributor

Metro Tartan

## Production Company

New Line Cinema

Corporation

In association with

Tin Pan Apple

de Passe Entertainment

Thomas Entertainment

## Producers

Charles Stettler

Maynell Thomas

## Line Producer

Grace Blake

## Associate Producer

Janet Grillo

## Production Executive

Carla Fry

## Production Co-ordinator

Betty Chin

## Unit Production Manager

Dwight Williams

## Location Manager

Paul Zulkowicz

## Executive in Charge of Post-production

Joe Fineman

## Post-production Supervisor

Judith Lyn Brown

## Assistant Directors

Randy Fletcher

Dale M. Nielsen

Kia B. Puriefoy

## Casting

Jaki Brown-Kaaman

Martha Diaz

## Screenplay

Seth Greenland

## Story

Doctor Dré

Ed Lover

Seth Greenland

## Script Supervisor

Lynn Lewis Lovett

## Director of Photography

Adam Kimmel

## Camera Operator

George Pattison

## Steadicam

Larry McConkey

## Film Editor

Jeffrey Wolf

## Editor

John Gilroy

## Production Designer

Ruth Ammon

## Set Decorator

Susan Raney

## Set Dressers

Jeff Naparstek

Stephen Finkin

Douglas Fecht

Deborah A. Dreyer

## Scenic Artist

Elizabeth Linn

## Special Effects

Matt Vogel

## Costume Design

Karen Perry

## Wardrobe Supervisor

Jennifer L. Bryan

## Key Make-up

Ellie Winslow

## Hair

Carol 'Ci Ci' Campbell

Additional:

Larry M. Cherry

## Main Title Design

Michael Ventresco

## Titles/Opticals

The Effects House Corp

## Music

Michael Wolff

Nic. tenBroek

## Music Performed by

Piano/Keyboards:

Michael Wolff

Keyboards:

Nic. tenBroek

Guitars/MPC-60:

Hami

Tenor Sax:

Bob Johnson

Bass:

John B. Williams

Drums:

Roy McCurdy

## Music Supervisors

Toby Emmerich

Kathy Nelson

## Music Editor

Todd Kasow

## Songs/Music Extracts

"Precious Lord, Take

My Hand" by Thomas

A. Dorsey, performed

by Bowlegged Lou;

"Follow The Leader"

by and performed

by Eric B & Rakim;

"Hip Hop Hooray"

by Keir Gist, Vincent

Brown, Anthony Criss,

performed by Naughty

By Nature; "Movin' On

Up" by Jeff Barry, Janet

DuBois; "Party and

Bullshit" by Big and Easy

Mo Bee, performed by

BIG, incorporates

elements from

"I'll Be There" by Gordie,

Hutch, West, Davis,

performed by Johnny

Hammond Smith,

incorporates elements

from "The Show" by

R. Walters, D. Davis,

performed Doug E.

Fresh; "Let's Go Through

The Motions" by Devante

and Chad "Dr Guess"

Elliot, performed by

JOEY: "What's Next

On The Menu?" by C. L.

Smooth, Peter Phillips,

performed by Pete Rock,

C. L. Smooth,

incorporates elements

from "Summer

Madness" by A. Taylor,

R. McKenna, R. Bell,

G. Brown, R. Westfield,

D. Thomas, C. Smith,

performed by Kool &

The Gang, incorporates

elements from

"Nautilus"; "You Don't

Have To Worry" by

Kenny 'G-Love' Greene,

Eddie 'DJ Eddie F.'

Ferrell, Kenny 'K-

Smooth' Komegay,

incorporates elements

from "Papa Don't Take

No Mess" by Brown,

Wesley, Starks, Bobbit;

"Hittin' Switches"

by and performed

by Erick Sermon;

"Hotness" by Dave Kelly,

Heavy D, performed

by Heavy D & Buju

Banton; "Who's The

Man?" by Everlast,

Danny Boy, DJ Lethal,

performed by House

of Pain, incorporates

elements from "The

Master Plan" by R. Bell,

R. Wright, K. Lassiter,

P. Duarte, K. Cheek,

M. Cheek, W. Beckett,

D. White, K. Bell,

performed by The K.G.'s;

"Lovin' You" by Crystal

Johnson, James Earl

Jones, Randy Fuller,

Kevin 'Big Kev'

McDaniels, performed

by Crystal Johnson;

"Pimp or Die" by Father

MC, T. West, Kool Chris,

Buttnaked Tim Dawg,

Cocheek, J-Z, performed

by Father MC; "Hello,

It's Me" by Spark, Timbo

King, performed by

Spark 950 & Timbo King;

"Ease Up" by 3rd Eye &

The Group Home, Jesse

West, performed by 3rd

Eye & The Group Home

Supervising Sound Editor

Stuart Levy

Dialogue Editor

John Purcell

ADR Supervisor

Gail Stockton

## ADR Editors

Kenton Jakub

Bruce Kitzmeyer

Marissa Littlefield

## Sound Mixer

Rosa Howell-Thornhill

## Re-recording Mixer

Peter Waggoner

## Foley Artist

Brian Vancho

## Stunt Co-ordinator

Jeff Ward

## Cast

Ed Lover

Himself

Doctor Dré

Himself

Badja Djola

Lionel Douglas

Cheryl 'Salt' James

Teesha Braxton

Jim Moody

Nick Crawford

Ice-T

Nighttrain/Chauncey

Andre B. Blake

Lamar

Rozwill Young

Sgt. B. Griles

Colin Quinn

Frankie Flynn

Todd-I

Shorty

Bowlegged Lou

Forty

Bernie Mac

G-George

Bill Bellamy

K.K.

T-Money

Bubba

Denis Leary

Sergeant Cooper

Kim Chan

Fuji

Vinny Pastore

Tony 'Clams' Como

Loat Loder

Hitman

Joe Lisi

Captain Reilly

Fab 5 Freddy

Himself

Tony Lip

Vito Pasquale

Apache

Smooth B

Bubba Workers

George T. Odum

Albert

Hugh L. Hurd

Mushmouth

Roger Robinson

Charlie

Maggie Rush

Brenda

Richard Bright

Demetrius

Dennis Vestunis

Gustave

KRS-One

Rashid

Stretch

Benny

James Cavanagh Burke

Officer Barnes

Karen T. Duffy

Officer Day

Philo Dawg

Gerald

Big Bub

Roscoe

Curtis Carrott

Boogie

Garfield

Customer in Chair

Little Buddy Shane

Homeboy

Caron Bernstein

Kelly

Randy Frazier

Reverend Green

The Guru

Lorenzo

Lorena Mann

Receptionist

Ken Ober

Bernstein

</



# VIDEO

**Mark Kermode and Geoffrey Macnab highlight their ten video choices of the month, and overleaf review, respectively, the rest of the rental and retail releases**

## VIDEO CHOICE



**Symphony of sorrow: Margaret Lockwood**

### Love Story

Director Leslie Arliss/UK 1944

"British films and British players are afraid of genuine emotion," Leslie Arliss once famously declared. *Love Story* was one of the Gainsborough melodramas with which he set out to change this unfortunate state of affairs. Uncharacteristically, it isn't a period piece and is set instead during the war. As in so many tearjerkers of the time (*Intermezzo*, *The Seventh Veil*) the heroine (Margaret Lockwood) is a pianist, which allows for plenty of swirling classical music and close-ups as she thumps

through a sonata. Arliss' script gives her a terminal illness and has her fall in love with a mining engineer (Stewart Granger) who is going blind. Perhaps it isn't ideal material for Lockwood - wicked ladies were generally her stock-in-trade. Still, there are moments, in which she achieves a Garbo-like luminosity. The film offers an intriguing vision of life in wartime Britain. Also released as part of the *Margaret Lockwood Collection* are *Madness of the Heart*, *Dr Syn*, *Owd Bob*, *Jassy*. (MFB No. 130)

● Retail: Rank Classic Collection RCC2283/4/5/6/7; Price £4.99; B/W; Certificate PG

### Nostradamus

Director Roger Christian/UK/Germany 1994

An impressively earthy historical biopic, which recounts the life of the notorious sixteenth-century sage. Tchéky Karyo is excellent as Michel de Nostradame, and provides a convincingly gritty portrayal of the doctor and herbalist whose radical methods and alarming insights made him the object of the Catholic Church's wrath. Although director Roger Christian is clearly compelled to dramatise Nostradamus' most famous predictions (the French revolution, Hitler, space travel), he is in his element when evoking a less fanciful (and often bawdy) historical milieu. The only low point is Rutger Hauer in a laughable cameo as The Mystic Monk. (S&S January 1995)

● Rental: First Independent VA20235; Certificate 15



**Bleak future: Tchéky Karyo**

### Reservoir Dogs

Director Quentin Tarantino/USA 1991

Banned for almost two years following the recent uproar concerning the supposed effects of video violence, Tarantino's magnificent debut feature is finally released uncut on video. Despite its gaudy reputation as a gun-toting splatterfest, *Reservoir Dogs* is visually more discreet than many will remember (the legendary ear-slicing scene happens off-screen) and far wittier than most mainstream comedies. Harvey Keitel, Tim Roth, Chris Penn, Steve Buscemi and Michael Madsen give superb ensemble performances as hard-talking, wisecracking gangsters, and Tarantino slips himself a scene-stealing monologue on the true nature of Madonna's 'Like a Virgin'. Musically, this is ground-breaking

work, with the action juxtaposed against 70s tunes (most memorably, 'Little Green Bag' by George Baker Selection and Stealer's Wheel's 'Stuck in the Middle with You'). As well, movie references ranging from obscure Hong Kong action pics to *The Taking of Pelham 123*, are scattered throughout. A modern masterpiece. (S&S January 1993)

● Rental: PolyGram PG1004; Certificate 18



**Angry young men: Buscemi, Keitel**

### Cold Heaven

Director Nicolas Roeg/USA 1992

Roeg's quirky supernatural thriller was originally slated for a theatrical release but became caught up in lengthy post-production wranglings. This is superior video viewing, boasting a magnetic central performance by Theresa Russell, and an atmosphere heavy with a sense of threat. An unfaithful wife, intent on abandoning her husband, is traumatised by his sudden death. But is he really gone for good? Russell makes a tasty meal of her character's guilt, wringing every drop of anguish from Scott's script, while Mark Harmon is surprisingly affecting as the (deceased?) spouse.

● Rental Premiere: Guild G8804; Certificate 15; 102 minutes; Producers Allan Scott, Jonathan D. Krane; Screenplay Allan Scott; Lead Actors Theresa Russell, Mark Harmon, James Russo, Will Patton

### The Sect (La setta)

Director Michele Soavi/Italy 1991

A stylish, atmospheric horror movie, this European hit cemented Michele Soavi's reputation as the rising king of Italian gothic cinema. As the millennium draws to a close, The Sect of the Faceless Ones prepare for a pre-ordained appointment with the Devil by embarking on a spree of savage ritualistic killings. Bedazzled by one of the cult's leading members (Herbert Lom on eerie form), schoolteacher Miriam (Kelly Leigh Curtis) is inducted into their fiendish ceremonies with horrifying results. Soavi's dreamlike direction and enticing eye for design lend an air of gravitas to an otherwise workaday storyline, while a few choice moments of grisly gore ensure that die-hard horror fans will not be disappointed.

● Rental Premiere: Guild G8794; Certificate 18; 115 minutes; Producers Dario Argento, Mario Cecchi Gori, Vittorio Cecchi Gori; Screenplay Dario Argento, Michele Soavi, Gianni Romoli; Lead Actors Kelly Leigh Curtis, Herbert Lom, Maria Angela Giordano





Violent passage: 'Hell is a City'

## Hell is a City

Director Val Guest/UK 1959

From time to time, Hammer Films produced low budget crime thrillers, of which *Hell is a City* is a prime example. The story, about a detective's attempts to recapture an armed robber, is old hat. But this is an authentic attempt at *film noir* which retains the feverish pace of its Hollywood predecessors while evoking a seedy, very British world of spivs, cheery landladies and villains who wash behind their ears. Grim and mercurial as the police inspector, Stanley Baker is a darker, more ambivalent figure than any of his criminal adversaries. The film has so much character that the flaws in the script are easily overlooked. (MFB No. 316)

● Retail: Warner Home Video SO38222; Price £10.99; B/W; Certificate PG

## The Life of Oharu (Saikaku Ichidai Onna)

Director Kenji Mizoguchi/Japan 1952

Mizoguchi's stately, very formal shooting style, with its emphasis on long takes and avoidance of montage, suggests a cold, detached film-maker who observes his characters from a distance. However, *The Life of Oharu* (which won the Silver Lion at the 1952 Venice Film Festival) is every bit as compelling as the most overblown Hollywood melodrama. A woman in seventeenth-century Japan is ruthlessly punished for defying social etiquette

by having an affair with a man below her class. The narrative unfolds in flashback with Oharu, a 50-year-old prostitute, reminded of her former lover by a statue of a Buddha she sees when taking refuge in a temple. Her story, which sees her slowly stripped of her pride and reduced to a level in which she is bought and sold "like a fish on the chopping board", is told in austere, understated fashion. It's an exquisite piece of film-making which quietly but trenchantly exposes the evils of Japanese patriarchy. (MFB No. 494)

● Retail: Tartan Video TVT1217; Price £15.99; B/W; Subtitles; Certificate 18



Heavy burden: Kinuyo Tanaka

## Greed

Director Erich von Stroheim/USA 1925

Von Stroheim took Frank Norris' novel, *McTeague*, and rather than simplify it, set out to make it yet more complex. Just as the main character Frank McTeague doesn't realise that his wife's lottery win



Money love: 'Greed'

has turned her against him, Von Stroheim seemed unaware that Hollywood wasn't likely to warm to a 130 reel movie on the subject of greed. Still, even in its disembowelled form, this remains an astonishing, socially committed film. It bucked a trend by abandoning stars, glamour and even studio lots to tell a downbeat story in an unpretentious way. There are some wonderful, poetic cut-aways, for instance the close-up of Trina and McTeague's feet as they embrace (she is so short she has to stand on his shoes), and the set-pieces are awesome.

● Retail Premiere: MGM/UA SO51360; Price £14.99; B/W; Silent; Certificate PG; 135 minutes; Producers Erich von Stroheim, Samuel Goldwyn; Screenplay Erich von Stroheim, June Mathias; Lead Actors Gibson Gowland, Zasu Pitts, Jean Hersholt, Sylvia Ashton

## Freaked

Directors Alex Winter, Tom Stern/USA 1993

Winter and Stern's ghoulish farce (originally titled *Hideous Mutant Freaks*) puts an irreverent spin on Tod Browning's classic shocker, *Freaks*, with uneven but often rewarding results. Randy Quaid is in top form as sideshow owner Elijah C. Skuggs, a hook-chinned, cracked-grinned horror who captures unsuspecting innocents and turns them into outlandish abominations for display in his circus. The make-up team clearly had a ball creating the monster effects,



Big top thrills: 'Freaked'

## Blanche

Director Walerian Borowczyk/France 1971

Part fairy tale, part horror pic, Borowczyk's second live-action feature is set in a medieval castle full of secret entrances and exits which parallel the intricacies of the film's narrative. Blanche, the heroine, is treated as a *tabula rasa*; she is the innocent figure on whom the various male characters (the baron and his stepson, the King and his page) project their fantasies. Borowczyk has a neat line in anthropomorphic metaphor: as the various suitors court the countess, their antics are mocked with recurring motifs of a pigeon trapped in its cage and a monkey on the prowl. His famous fetish for detail is also in evidence; goblets,

while *Bill and Ted* star Alex Winter romps through the proceedings with irrepressible delight. Sadly, after an impressive, zesty start, the narrative becomes bogged down. However, the pace is recaptured in the end and the visual treats on display more than compensate for the script's shortcomings.

● Rental Premiere: Fox Guild G8709; Certificate 15; 79 minutes; Producers Mary J. Ufland, Howard Ufland; Screenplay Tim Burns, Alex Winter, Tom Stern; Lead Actors Alex Winter, Randy Quaid, Megan Ward, William Sadler, Mr T, Brooke Shields, Keanu Reeves

caskets, harps, swords and books are scrutinised intently. There's a certain pathos in casting Michel Simon as the baron. His jowly, mastiff-like features can't help but recall another, equally enchanting love story in which he appeared more than 40 years before - Jean Vigo's *L'Atalante*. Like Vigo, Borowczyk is fascinated by physiognomies: faces of monks, courtiers, soldiers and even dogs are as much a part of the *mise en scène* as the costumes. Similarly, the landscape is lovingly photographed, with fields, forests and rivers acting as pastoral counterpoint to the grimness of life within the castle walls. (MFB No. 473)

● Retail: Connoisseur Video CR176; Price £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate PG



Innocent prey: Ligia Branice



Reviews in *Monthly Film Bulletin* and *Sight and Sound* are cited in parentheses. A retail video that has previously been reviewed in the rental section will be listed only and the film review reference given. The term 'Premiere' refers to a film that has had no prior UK theatrical release and is debuting on video. □ denotes closed captioning facility

## Rental

### Amateur

Director Hal Hartley; USA 1994; FoxVideo A109R; Certificate 15  
The paths of a self-proclaimed nymphomaniac (who has yet to indulge her obsession), a dangerous man and an ex-porn star collide with predictably bizarre results. This is the weakest of auteur Hartley's quirky features, but it still stands out above the bulk of today's independent American film-making. However, the aimlessness of his self-penned plots is beginning to grate – perhaps it's time he directed someone else's script. (S&S January 1995)

### Bad Boy Bubby

Director Rolf de Heer; Australia/Italy 1993; EV EVV1304; Certificate 18  
Rolf de Heer's self-consciously weird independent offering shows up what is wrong with made-to-measure cult movies, including a silly plot, limp direction, over-the-top performances and cruelty to cats. A young man, whose mother has kept him trapped inside their apartment all his life, escapes into the real world where he achieves unexpected success. Nasty rubbish. (S&S November 1994)

### Dallas Doll

Director Ann Turner; Australia 1994; Tartan Video TVT 1220; Certificate 15  
An inept satire on the mundanity of middle class mores, disowned by its star Sandra Bernhard on whose shoulders, ironically, most of the blame must fall. A feisty independent golf player wreaks havoc in a suburban Sydney home by attempting to seduce every member of the family. (S&S February 1995)

### It Could Happen to You

Director Andrew Bergman; USA 1994; NVT21582; Certificate PG  
From the director of the enchanting *Honeymoon in Vegas* comes a delightfully lightweight romantic comedy, boosted by endearing performances from Nicolas Cage and Bridget Fonda. Purportedly

based on a true story, the film finds a good-hearted policeman honouring an unexpectedly expensive promise to a waitress and discovering true love in the process. (S&S December 1994) □

### Junior

Director Ivan Reitman; USA 1994; Universal VHA1816; Certificate PG  
A surprisingly touching and entertaining comedy drama which (despite the risible plot premise) provides thought-provoking laughs. A doctor (Danny DeVito) working on a new fertility drug, artificially impregnates his fellow scientist (Arnold Schwarzenegger) as an experiment. Arnie demonstrates his growing comic talents, beautifully mimicking the rigours of childbearing, and Reitman spoons on the saccharine with pleasant results. (S&S January 1995) □

### Ladybird Ladybird

Director Ken Loach; UK 1994; PolyGram 1079; Certificate 15  
A working class mother, deemed unfit to care for her children by the social services, fights to regain custody. Despite a powerful central performance by newcomer Crissy Rock, Loach's bombastic drama (inspired by real life events) frequently descends into grim hyperbole, presenting a portrait of life so cartoonishly miserable that it soon becomes unendurable. (S&S October 1994)

### Sirens

Director John Duigan; Australia/UK 1994; Touchstone D325572; Certificate 15  
Director Duigan's flair for flirtatiousness fails him in this oddly vapid comedy. A sexually repressed clergyman (Hugh Grant) learns about the pleasures of the flesh from a gregarious artist with a penchant for nude models. Super model Elle Macpherson takes her clothes off a lot. (S&S August 1994)

### Trapped in Paradise

Director George Gallo; USA 1994; FoxVideo 8690; Certificate PG  
Run-of-the-mill upbeat comedy which fails to exploit the rib-tickling potential of its impressive cast. Crooked ex-cons Dana Carvey and Jon Lovitz attempt to drag their long-suffering brother Nicolas Cage off the straight and narrow. Passable fare. (S&S April 1995)

### Welcome II the Terrordome

Director Ngozi Onwurah; UK 1994; FoxGuild G8802; Certificate 18  
In an unspecified, racially segregated



Larger than life: 'Junior'

future, a mixed race couple struggle to keep their relationship and unborn child alive. Onwurah's harsh dystopian fantasy is a savagely misjudged affair which veers wildly between the pretentious and the offensive. A clumsy script, ugly visuals and a brace of hysterical performances add to the chaos. (S&S February 1995)

### White Angel

Director Chris Jones; UK 1993; PolyGram 1078; Certificate 18  
An ambitious British thriller, notable for the tenacious dedication with which it was created by a group of young and largely inexperienced film-makers. Two murderers – a dentist and a crime novelist – partake in a gruelling game of psychological cat-and-mouse. Some inventive plot twists and a couple of enjoyable surprises make this watchable low budget fare. (S&S May 1994)

## Rental premiere

### Children of the Corn III: Urban Harvest

Director James D.R. Hickox; USA 1994; Hi Fliers HFV8292; Certificate 18; 89 minutes; Producers Gary Depew, Brad Southwick; Screenplay Dode B. Levenson; Lead Actors Daniel Cerny, Ron Melendez, Michael Ensign, Nancy Grahn  
After a rotten first instalment, the *Corn* horror cycle has steadily improved throughout the course of its inevitable sequels. This sprightly part three finds two of the Devil's children moving from the wilds of Nebraska to a modern town, where unsuspecting foster parents fail to grasp the deadly potential of the new arrivals. Upbeat direction by Hickox (brother of genre stalwart Anthony), a tight screenplay and a few inventive, nasty special effects make this bearable. Watch out for part IV.

### Ernest Rides Again

Director John Cherry; USA 1994; First Independent VA20236; Certificate PG; 90 minutes; Producer Stacy Williams; Screenplay John Cherry, William M. Akers; Lead Actors Jim Varney, Ron James, Duke Ernsberger, Jeffrey Pillars.  
Irritating Jim Varney once again dons the mantle of Ernest (an aggravating buffoon

originally dreamt up by television advertising executives). This time, Ernie and his dimwit pal Abner Melon unearth a huge cannon reputed to contain the crown jewels of England.

### Evolver

Director Mark Rosman; USA 1994; 20.20 Vision NVTM0424; Certificate 15; 88 minutes; Producers Jeff Geoffray, Walter Josten, Henery Seggerman; Screenplay Mark Rosman; Lead Actors Ethan Randall, Cindy Pickett, John DeLance, Cassidy Rae  
With *Lawnmower Man II* due for a cinema release later this year, Mark Rosman's addition to the virtual reality robot thriller genre is hardly essential viewing. Nevertheless, some enjoyably flashy special effects and the efficient reworking of a well-worn plot make this palatable fun. A prototype 'evolving' weapon is used as the basis for a state-of-the-art interactive game, and results in deadly penalties.

### Fallen Angels

Director Larry Leahy; USA 1994; Hi Fliers HFV8302; Certificate 15; 92 minutes; Producer Tony Cinciripini; Screenplay Tony Cinciripini, Larry Leahy; Lead Actors James Remar, Michael Wright, Emily Longstreth  
A double-crossing gangster, on the run from his bosses, heads into the desert and picks up a young woman attempting to escape her own dark past. Larry Leahy's moody thriller is a strange affair, with footage of a huge white limousine wending its way through unending desertescapes punctuated by brittle conversations between its three passengers; gangster Remar (reliably gritty); runaway photographer Longstreth (admirably flaky) and chauffeur Wright (coolly elegant). A refreshing alternative to the usual straight-to-video shoot-em-ups, this is a welcome (if baffling) change.

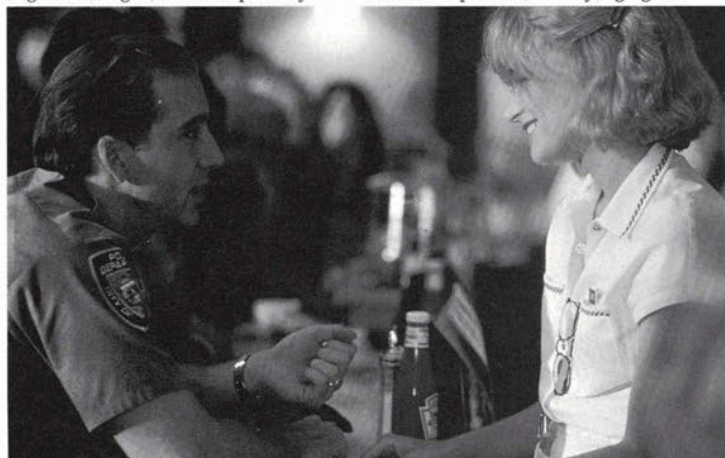
### Soft Deceit

Director Jorge Montesi; Canada 1994; Hi Fliers HFV8308; Certificate 18; 91 minutes; Producers Lewis B. Chestler, T.A. Baird, Jorge Montesi; Screenplay Jorge Montesi, Roy Sallows; Lead Actors Patrick Bergin, Kate Vernon, John Wesley Shipp, Gwyneth Walsh  
With his big-screen career behind him, Patrick Bergin (*Sleeping with the Enemy*, *Mountains of the Moon*) has carved himself an attractive niche as a straight-to-video star with a reputation for steamy action scenes. *Soft Deceit* is no exception, 80 minutes of perfunctory thriller plot (a con artist is sprung from prison in order to locate his loot) is given *raison d'être* by 10 minutes in which Bergin performs his sex symbol party piece to the strains of wailing saxophones.

## Retail

### All Quiet on the Western Front

Director Lewis Milestone; USA 1930; Universal VHR1862; Price £12.99; B/W; Certificate PG  
Newly restored version of Milestone's anti-war classic. Lew Ayres turns in a memorable performance as an idealistic young soldier who recoils at the horror of war. Imaginative montage and thousands of extras ensure that the movie is more dynamic than the average early talkie. According to legend, Milestone didn't know how to end the film, and it was second unit cinematographer Karl



Expensive coffee: Cage, Fonda, 'It Could Happen to You'



## PRIVATE VIEW

Peter Capaldi on 'Pinocchio' and the art of Disney

# Small temptations



Disney's darkest film: Pinocchio encounters the sinister puppet master Stromboli

I am, I imagine, like most people in that there are images in my head that speak to me powerfully of my childhood. Some of these images are clear and precise, but others are softer, half-formed things of colour and light that somehow trigger deep-seated feelings in me, such as warmth, security, fear and sadness. I can't for certain say where these memories come from, but some years ago when I decided to have a look at Disney's *Pinocchio* (1940) again, I felt that I might have found the source of some of them.

*Pinocchio* is a film that excels in every area, but most particularly in atmosphere. The opening sequence is a beautiful evocation of peace; starting tight on a glowing star, the camera pulls back over the rooftops of a sleeping mountain town before setting down on Geppetto's shop in which a solitary light glows in the window. The film then cuts to Jiminy Cricket's POV, and the camera takes a number of gentle leaps towards the window, the interior of the shop gradually coming into focus as the exterior moves out of focus. The whole sequence is a magnificent example of the use of multi-plane camera (put crudely: varying degrees of fore, middle and background painted on to separated sheets of glass stacked vertically beneath the camera). Today, film-makers would create the same effect with computers. It would be faster, more realistic. But what they would lose would be the sense of an illustration coming to life before your eyes. Somehow you feel like you have entered a storybook.

Advances in film animation technology have meant losses as well as gains. In the late 50s a technique was

developed which transferred animators' drawings directly on to cels by the use of xerox photography, thus cutting out the tracing and inking stages of the process. This was more economic for the studio and eliminated almost a whole department. But it meant that the drawings became more linear and scratchy, and the backgrounds – once the most beautiful and imaginative area of Disney's work – had to follow suit and become plain and linear. Computer animation has provided unprecedented advances in the agility of the camera, but I already feel over familiar with the sense of movement and the kind of shots this technology is used for. If computers can do anything, it is truly harder for them to impress. There are scenes in *Pinocchio* that would be a doddle using today's technology. In fact, I can bet that if the film was made today whole sequences would be redesigned, made faster and more frantic, cuts here, cuts there. And they would never allow the story to unfold at the gentle pace it does. But *Pinocchio* is handmade – and it shows.

It is also Disney's darkest film. The fate delivered to the yobbish boys who succumb to the temptations (and who wouldn't) of Pleasure Island is very unpleasant indeed. Stromboli, the puppet master, despite his clichéd Italianisms, is truly the nastiest bit of work Disney ever came up with, well beyond the camp posturing of Cruella De Vil and second only to the loathsome coachman who does a fine trade in lost souls. You won't see these two characters in EuroDisney. The theme repeated over and over is the danger of temptation, one of the most delicious aspects of adulthood, but in

*Pinocchio*'s world, the world of the child, the results of succumbing are catastrophic. The bogeymen, apart from the vaudevillian fox and cat, are serious. Jiminy Cricket has his work cut out being *Pinocchio*'s conscience. And it is interesting that when he succeeds he gets a medal, an act not unlike the angel in Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life*, earning his wings among the stars six years later.

I'm positive *Pinocchio* was a huge influence on *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. The opening, the stars, the mountains, the blue fairy, all have echoes in the UFO sequences of Spielberg's film. Indeed, the Richard Dreyfuss character in *Close Encounters* intends to take his children to see *Pinocchio*, but fails. The five note 'tune' used to communicate with the aliens sounds like someone fumbling to play 'When You Wish Upon a Star', the melody of which actually does make it into the final moments of John Williams' score.

Most people my age (37) would have been taken to see the film as a very young child. Similarly, anyone my age would have had it devalued by the constant screening of the 'I Got No Strings' song sequence on BBC television's *Disney Time*, which replayed the same clips to death four times a year and made me think I never wanted to see the film again. But I am so glad I did.

In an age when each new Disney cartoon movie is heralded as the best yet, and arrives having turned over millions of dollars at the box office, *Pinocchio* stands quietly above them all as a masterpiece.

*Pinocchio* is released on video by Walt Disney Classics

Freund who suggested the shot of the dying soldier's hand stretching for a butterfly. Whatever its origins, it is a moment of true cinematic epiphany. (MFB No. 201)

### The Atomic Cafe

Directors Kevin Rafferty, Jayne Loader, Pierce Rafferty; USA 1982; Academy Video CAV031; Price £15.99; B/W & Colour; Certificate 12

Hilarious but haunting documentary, assembled in the tradition of Emile De Antonio, the great advocate of 'radical scavenging'. By scouring the archives and editing together relevant clips from newsreels, television shows and commercials, the film-makers expose the lunacy which gripped the US at the height of the Cold War. Images of radiation victims and Nixon in his Alger Hiss-baiting days are contrasted with bizarre examples of pro-nuclear propaganda. There is something chilling about the sheer, iridescent beauty of an atomic explosion; even more chilling is the way Americans learned to love the bomb. (MFB No. 587)

### The Bardot Collection: And God Created Woman (Et Dieu... créa la femme)/Don Juan (Don Juan 1973 ou si Don Juan était une femme)

Director Roger Vadim; France 1956/1973; Arrow FC011/FC012; Price £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 18

Brigitte Bardot's first film with Vadim, *And God Created Woman*, is fresh and entertaining, mainly because of her mesmerising performance as an 18-year-old temptress who wreaks romantic havoc in St Tropez. The locations are colourful enough, but the script and direction are feeble. At least it's exuberant, which is more than can be said for the sleazy, torpid *Don Juan*. (MFB Nos. 280/485)

### Best Boy

Director Ira Wohl; USA 1979; Academy Video CAV032; Price £15.99; Certificate E

Ira Wohl's Oscar winning film is a more intimate affair than the average fly-on-the-wall documentary. It charts three climactic years in the life of Wohl's retarded, middle-aged cousin Philly, who has a mental age of five and is



'And God Created Woman': Brigitte Bardot





#### A way with words: 'Cyrano de Bergerac'

mollycoddled by his elderly parents. Although the story is tinged with sadness (Philly's parents both died), the dignity and good humour with which he and his parents cope with day-to-day life make for a very affecting film. Wohl captures intensely personal moments without ever seeming intrusive. (MFB No. 576)

#### Bonnie and Clyde

Director Arthur Penn; USA 1967; MGM/UA Home Video S001026; Price £10.99; Certificate 18 (MFB No. 405)

#### Cyrano de Bergerac

Director Michael Gordon; USA 1950; Fabulous Films ACC04042; Price £10.99; B/W; Certificate U  
José Ferrer, who won an Oscar for his performance, is quite wonderful as Rostand's big-snozzled romantic hero. His Cyrano is a more cerebral, poetic sort than Gérard Depardieu's swaggering soldier of a few years back. He has the ability to bellow and rage, and to wield his sword like a young Fairbanks, but it's being articulate which counts. Without Ferrer, the pedestrian, stagebound quality of the film-making would be all too evident. (MFB No. 213)

#### Ballas Doll

Director Ann Turner; USA 1994; Tartan Video TVT 1229; Price £15.99; Widescreen; Certificate 18 (See Rental)

#### Eva

Director Joseph Losey; France/Italy 1962; Lumiere LUM2445; Price £14.99; B/W; Certificate 15  
Material best suited for a B-thriller (the film is adapted from a James Hadley Chase novel) is given an upmarket, art house gloss. Rhythmic editing and Gianni di Venanzo's black and white cinematography lend a chic, atmospheric air to its evocation of Venice. Jeanne Moreau is wonderfully malevolent as Eva, but Stanley Baker's hard-drinking charlatan of a Welsh novelist is left flailing in her wake. Apparently Losey bickered with his producers and wasn't happy with how the film was re-edited behind his back. But with its formal elegance and merciless probing of psychological and sexual insecurities, it is still recognisably the director's work. (MFB No. 336)

#### Fatal Instinct

Director Carl Reiner; USA 1993; MGM/UA Home Video S053944; Price £10.99; Certificate 15 (S&S Video September 1994)

#### The Follies of Elodie (Les Folies d'Elodie)

Director André Genoves; France 1981; Angel Films AHA3008; Price £12.99; Certificate 18  
Lent a certain, if tenuous, respectability by its director's long association with Claude Chabrol (who appears in a cameo) this is the everyday story of a pair of blue knickers. The briefs in question belong to Elodie, a respectable, married woman with a voracious appetite for erotic adventure. (MFB No. 611)

#### Frightened City

Director John Lemont; UK 1961; Warner Home Video S038224; Price £10.99; B/W; Certificate PG  
Not much cop as a thriller, but an interesting curiosity because of its collision of acting styles. Herbert Lom, one of British cinema's exotic outsiders, is the accountant typecast as a villain because of his foreign accent and cultured ways; John Gregson is the stuffy, stiff upper lip policeman and Sean Connery, shortly before he assumed the mantle of Bond, represents the shock of the new. The story concerns attempts to unite London's criminal gangs in a citywide protection racket. (MFB No. 333)

#### The Getaway

Director Roger Donaldson; USA 1994; Warner Home Video S013316; Price £10.99; Certificate 18 (S&S July 1994)

#### Immoral Tales (Contes immoraux)

Director Walerian Borowczyk; France 1974; Connoisseur Video CR177; Price £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 18  
The BBFC had trouble working out whether this compendium of erotic yarns was art or pornography - a dilemma which is also likely to test viewers. As in his earlier film, *Blanche*, inanimate objects take on totemic significance, but it's what is done with the objects which sometimes astounds. Borowczyk's *mise en scène* and fascination with corporeality is reminiscent of Peter Greenaway, but his vision is that of a dirty old man. (MFB No. 521)

#### Jaws

Director Steven Spielberg; USA 1975;

Universal 1044W/1002W; Price £10.99; (Widescreen £12.99); Certificate PG  
Re-released in two formats to mark its twentieth anniversary, Spielberg's first great success remains an exemplary piece of popular narrative cinema. The shark itself isn't especially scary (hence the certificate), but the storytelling is wonderfully assured. Robert Shaw's turn as salty sea dog Quint, a latterday Ahab with a grudge against the Great White, steals the show. (MFB No. 503)

#### The Last Seduction

Director John Dahl; USA 1993; PolyGram ITC6352643; Price £10.99; Certificate 18 (S&S August 1994)

#### Legend of the Lost

Director Henry Hathaway; USA 1957; MGM/UA Home Video S051771; Price £12.99; Widescreen; Certificate U (MFB No. 290)

#### A Matter of Life and Death

Director Michael Powell; UK 1946; Rank Classic Collection RCC2277; Price £9.99; B/W & Colour; Certificate U  
One of the Archers' finest moments, this British cinema classic is set between heaven (an austere, monochrome place) and earth, which is filmed in best Jack Cardiff technicolor. David Niven is the nonchalant wartime pilot who must convince a heavenly court that he should be allowed to stay alive for a little longer so he can pursue his relationship with Kim Hunter. Pressburger's script masterfully blends whimsy with pathos. Two scenes to savour are the opening, with its sudden jolt from a leisurely pan across the heavens to frantic action as Niven's plane plummets to the ground, and the astonishing shot which seems to travel through Niven's eyelid and into the recesses of his mind. (MFB No. 155)

#### The Paul Newman Collection:

**Cool Hand Luke/The Drowning Pool/Harper/The Young Philadelphians**

Directors Stuart Rosenberg/Jack Smight/Vincent Sherman; USA 1967/1975/1966/1959; Warner Home Video S011037/S011371/S013912/S011157; Price £9.99 each; Certificate 15/12/12/15 (MFB Nos. 408/500/388/305)

#### Night of the Living Dead/Return of the Living Dead

Directors Tom Savini/Dan O'Bannon; USA

1990/1985; Tartan Video TVT1155; Price £19.99; Widescreen; Certificate 18 (S&S April 1993/MFB No. 623)

#### The Paper

Director Ron Howard; USA 1994; Universal VHR1774; Price £10.99; Certificate 15 (S&S May 1994) □

#### Payroll

Director Stanley Hayes; UK 1961; Warner Home Video S038219; Price £10.99; B/W; Certificate PG  
Brisk British heist caper, let down by slack plotting, but which boasts an impressively choreographed robbery sequence. Like *Get Carter*, the film is set in Newcastle. Unfortunately, director Hayes doesn't make the most of the locations. The villains, led by Michael Craig, all speak with southern accents. Billie Whitelaw offers a spirited performance in the unlikely role of the housewife turned avenger. (MFB No. 329)

#### Pinocchio

Directors Ben Sharpsteen/Hamilton Luske; USA 1940; Walt Disney Classics D202392; Price £15.99; Certificate U  
Restored version of the cartoon classic, released complete with Dolby soundtrack. (MFB No. 75) □

#### Scenes from a Marriage (Scener ur ett Äktenskap)

Director Ingmar Bergman; Sweden 1973; Tartan Video TVT 1103; Price £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 15  
Ingmar Bergman's intense, claustrophobic study of a failing marriage was originally shot in six episodes for Swedish television. This presumably explains the onus put on close-ups and the oppressively boxed-in quality. Seen in a single sitting, it's quite a trial, with the viewer left feeling like a shell-shocked divorce lawyer. Erland Josephson is the adulterous husband, Liv Ullmann the wife he betrays. (MFB 492)

#### Smiles of a Summer Night (Sommarnattens Leende)

Director Ingmar Bergman; Sweden 1955; Tartan Video TVT 1189; Price £15.99; Subtitles; B/W; Certificate 15  
Enchanting sex comedy, given bite by its highly acerbic attitude toward relationships. The men on display are all absurdly vain: one's a self-important



Second chance: David Niven, Kim Hunter, 'A Matter of Life and Death'



## ENDNOTES

By Mark Kermode



Missing the image: Kubrick's technical masterpiece 'Barry Lyndon'

"All art and no matter" was how critic Michael Billington described Stanley Kubrick's film *Barry Lyndon* in the London Illustrated News in 1975. "[It is] a series of still pictures which will please the retina while denying our hunger for drama." Although harsh, Billington's words perfectly capture the contemporary critical response to Kubrick's lavish costume drama – it was regarded as a cinematic *folie de grandeur*, a masterpiece of design which lacked dramatic or narrative cohesion. Although nominated for seven Academy Awards, including Best Picture, the film's Oscar triumphs reflected the generally held sentiment that its achievements were mainly technical.

Shot using revolutionary lenses which allowed director of photography John Alcott to film scenes by candlelight, the film picked up statuettes for Best Cinematography, Best Costume Design, Best Art Direction and Best Scoring. This last award, received by the film's music director Leonard Rosenman, was particularly intriguing. As *Barry Lyndon* didn't feature original music and instead consisted of a selection of adroitly chosen, well-established tunes, it was nominated for Original Song Score and/or Adaptation, where it competed against the rock opera *Tommy* among others. Meanwhile, in the more prestigious Original Score category, John Williams' *Jaws* beat *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Bite the Bullet* to the Oscar (the latter penned by Alex North, who seven years earlier had his score for *2001: A Space Odyssey* thrown off Kubrick's space epic in favour of classical offerings).

In the 20 years since its original release (and box office rejection), *Barry Lyndon* has experienced a critical reappraisal and it is now considered to be one of Kubrick's finest works, turning up with increasing regularity in top 100 film lists. In accordance with its new status, the distributor, Warner Bros, has finally released the soundtrack on CD. Available briefly on record back in the 70s, *Barry Lyndon: Music from the Academy Award Winning Soundtrack* soon became a collectors item. The handsome CD re-issue follows years of legal wrangling –

demurely described by Warners Bros as a lengthy "effort to secure rights" – of the sort which traditionally seems to accompany any Kubrick-related product. The CD (with a running time of just over 51 minutes) improves on the original vinyl release which was far from complete, and comprises what appears to be a comprehensive breakdown of most of the musical cues from the movie – from The Chieftains' 'Women of Ireland' to an adaptation of Schubert's 'Piano Trio in E Flat', Mozart's 'March from Idomeneo', Handel's 'Sarabande-Duel' (performed by the National Philharmonic Orchestra) and the British Grenadiers blasting out the traditional fifes and drums with gusto.

The CD release of *Barry Lyndon* is a laudable exercise in film score compilation – an exhaustive search for the legal rights to an array of music culminating in the creation of a definitive soundtrack album. Yet ironically, as with the film, the soundtrack is a technical rather than an artistic triumph; a must-have item for collectors, but which could well end up hardly ever played. Unlike 2001: *A Space Odyssey* or even Williams' well-worn but still entertaining *Jaws* score, *Barry Lyndon* is more an exacting journal of record than a satisfying listening experience. It's a painstakingly constructed catalogue of disparate music which (in the absence of John Alcott's memorable images) flits uneasily between folksy jigs and portentous classical music with an alarming lack of internal coherence. While each carefully chosen piece of music acts as a perfect accompaniment to the film (frequently saving it from Ryan O'Neal's and Marisa Berenson's faltering performances), away from the screen the music seems to serve no such purpose. Instead, the relationships between pieces are more circumstantial than circumspect.

Without a doubt, this long awaited *Barry Lyndon* soundtrack will take its place alongside other well-known Kubrick film scores, such as *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Shining*, but unfortunately, its value may well be more evident on the shelf than in the CD player.

lawyer, another a conceited officer in the dragoons and the third is a self-pitying Lutheran priest. The women they pursue are either hopelessly naive or consummate plotters. It's only the magical summer night which enables the couples to sort out their various romantic crises. This seems light-hearted by comparison with most of the director's other work, but scratch beneath the surface and you'll find that old, familiar pessimism. (MFB No. 274)

### A Star is Born

Director Frank Pierson; USA 1976; Warner Home Video S001020; Price £10.99; Certificate 15 (MFB No. 518)

### Street of Shadows

Director Richard Vernon; UK 1953; Warner Home Video S038284; Price £12.99; B/W; Certificate PG  
Little known Anglo-Amalgamated B-thriller set in 50s Soho. Cesar Romero plays Luigi, a Humphrey Bogart-style nightclub owner who mixes charm and cynicism. Kay Kendall is the society woman he falls in love with and sticks by, even when she is suspected of murder. Vernon successfully evokes a London demi-monde, peopled by chancers and high-society rakes. But the film belongs to Victor Maddern as Limpy, a deformed, perversely sympathetic villain who seems to have slipped out of the pages of Graham Greene. (MFB No. 232)

### Sudden Impact

Director Clint Eastwood; USA 1983; Warner Home Video S011341; Price £10.99; Certificate 18 (MFB No. 600)

### Tales of Hoffman

Director Michael Powell; UK 1951; Warner Home Video S038278; Price £10.99; Certificate U  
Perhaps not as pleasurable as *The Red Shoes*, the Archers' second ballet film is nevertheless the closest they came to what Powell described as a "composed film". This is stylisation taken to extremes. Dialogue is more or less redundant: it's the colour, dance and music which matters. More inventive than any rock promo, the film comprises three different adventures, all set to Offenbach music and concerning the poet Hoffman's search for the ideal woman. (MFB No. 209)

### Together Alone

Director P. J. Castellaneta; USA 1991; *Dangerous To Know* DTK035; Price £12.99; Certificate 15 (S&S June 1992)

### True Romance

Director Tony Scott; USA 1993; Warner Home Video S02992; Price £14.99; Certificate 18 (S&S November 1993)

### Zero Patience

Director John Greyson; Canada 1993; *Dangerous To Know* DTK029; Price £15.99; Certificate 18  
Revue-style satire which manages to broach the subject of Aids without losing its sense of humour. This starts from the premise that Victorian explorer Richard Burton sipped from the fountain of youth, thereby surviving into the twentieth century. He's now a taxidermist-cum-curator, and he wants to use 'Patient Zero', a French-Canadian flight attendant reputed to have brought

back the HIV infection to North America, in an exhibition he's organising. The dialogue is a little arch, but the musical numbers are staged with great elan. (S&S September 1994)

## Retail premiere

### Evil Senses

Director Gabriele Lavia; Italy 1986; Angel Films AHA3002; Price £12.99; Certificate 18; 90 minutes; Producer Pietro Innocenzi; Screenplay Gabriele Lavia; Lead Actors Gabriele Lavia, Mimsy Farmer, Monica Guerritore  
Erotic thriller, written, directed and starring Gabriele Lavia, in which he plays a hit man forced to go into hiding in a Rome brothel. An exercise in narcissism on Lavia's part, the film is sleekly shot, and has enough narrative twists to maintain a modicum of interest despite the risibly melodramatic sex scenes.

### Miranda

Director Tinto Brass; Italy 1985; Angel Films AHA3001; Price £12.99; Certificate 18; 90 minutes; Producer Giovanni Bertolucci; Screenplay Carla Cipriani; Lead Actors Serena Grandi, Andrea Occhipinti, Franco Branciarci, Andy J. Forest  
Sex comedy set in 50s Italy and directed in typical bawdy style by Tinto Brass, the man behind *Caligula* and *Salon Kitty*. The eponymous heroine (Serena Grandi) is a landlady of a small country tavern looking for a husband. She tests as many potential models as possible.

### Silent Classics Collection:

#### Ben-Hur: A Tale of Christ

Director Fred Niblo; USA 1925; MGM/UA S051474; Price £14.99; B/W; Silent; Certificate PG; 143 minutes; Producers Louis B. Mayer, Samuel Goldwyn, Irving Thalberg; Screenplay Bess Meredith, Carey Wilson; Lead Actors Ramon Navarro, Francis X. Bushman, Carmel Myers, May McAvoy  
The original sword-and-sandal epic, released in a restored version with tinted and early technicolor sequences intact.

#### The Big Parade

Director King Vidor; USA 1925; MGM/UA S051356; Price £14.99; B/W; Silent; Certificate U; 138 minutes; Producer Irving Thalberg; Screenplay Harry Behn; Lead Actors John Gilbert, Renee Adoree  
MGM blockbuster which is reckoned to have been the most profitable film of the silent era. John Gilbert stars as a dashing American soldier in wartime France. The film has some sort of pacifist message, but it was the spectacle, not the politics, which brought the crowds in.

### Flesh and the Devil

Director Clarence Brown; USA 1927; MGM/UA S051358; Price £14.99; B/W; Silent; Certificate U; 113 minutes; Producer Louis B. Mayer; Screenplay Benjamin F. Glazer; Lead Actors John Gilbert, Greta Garbo, Lars Hanson  
Lavish MGM love story, famous for helping cement the tempestuous on-screen/off-screen relationship between Greta Garbo and John Gilbert. The young Garbo is luminously lit and photographed by her favourite cinematographer, William Daniels. The whole affair has that weird, exotic glamour which the talkies somehow could never recapture.



Letters are welcome, and should be addressed to the Editor at Sight and Sound, British Film Institute, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL. Facsimile 0171 436 2327

## BBFC travesty

From Maggie Mills

Your contents page for the June issue describes Richard Falcon's column (page 63) as an account, and I quote, of the "BBFC's inner workings". That is a travesty. A creditable public relations exercise for the BBFC certainly – although nowhere can I see it explicitly stated that he is, as he is, a current censor; but an account of the "inner working" of censorship in Britain which should be discoverable to the viewing public? Allow me to doubt it.

Oh Mr Sight and Sound Editor, the wool is being pulled over your eyes and you are pulling the wool over those of your readers. Soho

Maggie Mills was a BBFC Examiner (1976-1994)

## Violence and make-believe

From Brian Parkinson

Martin Barker's piece on *Natural Born Killers* and media violence (S&S June) constructs an utterly unsustainable argument around a few sensible sceptical points together with some crass misunderstandings and wild leaps of logic. According to the author, there is no such thing as "violence in the media" about whose effects we should be concerned, because "it is just stupid... to think that 'violence' can be abstracted from the hugely different contexts of meaning and use in which it occurs." From this obtuse angle, it is dumber still even to try to investigate the impact of this non-existent research object. The implication here seems to be the content of any message is determined completely by the surrounding discourses. So now apparently there is nothing inside the text either. But could we not easily agree that *NBK* is a more violent film than, say, *Before Sunrise*, and that this relative assessment would be unlikely to alter no matter what contextual considerations were operative? It is surely no cultural accident that *NBK* has been scapegoated as ultra-violent, any more than it is surprising that *Before Sunrise* is rarely condemned for its gratuitous depiction of blood-letting. Similarly, *NBK* could presumably be made less violent by removing some of the scenes showing shootings and beatings and replacing them with polite conversation, kissing, or landscape shots. In short, a category such as "violence" does not need to be self-standing, hermetic or watertight to be workable for certain delimited purposes.

The culturally constructed evidence, such as it is, will not be wished away just because the present author labels it as meaningless; any more than *NBK* might be reconstructed as a non-violent film as a result of his attempt at reframing. Unfortunately, Barker's understanding of the internal logic of the actually influential arguments is sadly lacking. For example, writing of copy-cat incidents, he contends that "statistical randomness would have produced more authenticated cases than we so far have". In this regard, I would be interested to know what formula the author might use to calculate the expected population base-rate frequency of children inventing the idea and

associated practices of *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers*, and how he would interpret the associated playground conduct of the children who are its main – perhaps its only – fans. This is not random behaviour, it is deliberate make-believe. The main interpretative problem is not whether such imitation occurs but what the same individuals would be doing if they had not seen this programme, had seen another less violent programme, or had not been watching television at all. In other words, it is hard to draw definitive conclusions because life has no control condition. And this is exactly where social psychological investigations in their limited and fallible way can help to clarify the picture.

I am no supporter of film censorship. I thought *NBK*, however interesting, was ultimately a deeply confused film; but I am glad I was allowed to see it. In much the same way, I am happy to have had the opportunity to peruse the various commentaries on the movie and the surrounding controversy that appeared in the press, including the many misguided and hysterical pieces, and Barker's own article. Perhaps in his view these prejudicial texts are what should be censored or banned?

University of Leicester, Leicester

## Hoop fantasies

From Mike Gower

bell hooks' diatribe on *Hoop Dreams* (S&S, April) made me think the film must have been butchered for its UK release.

I'd say her bias – that *Hoop Dreams* is just another example of a society where "white folks want to see and enjoy images of black folks on screen" – hasn't just informed her take on the film but marred it. The first tip comes in her critique of film culture, where the white audience with whom she watches *Hoop Dreams* takes a "voyeuristic pleasure" and "lurid fascination" in Arthur Agee and William Gates, enjoying another example of how "working-class black people can become cheap entertainment." It's not a description that I typically ascribe to documentary-goers. hooks then says, "This film tells the world how the American dream works." Everyone I've talked with (albeit in Canada) saw it as a strong testament to how the whole Apple Pie thing is a crock.

hooks complains that the documentary got critical acclaim despite its traditional structure. But how many films cited as best film material are technically adventurous? The strength of *Hoop Dreams* comes not from its structure, but from the individuals within its three-hour frame.

Now, I know documentary film-makers influence the content of films, but there's a sense in *Hoop Dreams* that the people on-screen set the agenda.

The *Hoop Dreams* I watched left the talking – except for the setting up of game scenarios – almost exclusively to the people on-screen. In one of the few departures from this, I heard the film-makers sharing in the audience's surprise when William shows up with a girlfriend and a three-month old baby (not with the pregnant girlfriend hooks' version had). William has clearly set the agenda for when this part of his life should be revealed to the world.

hooks' manifesto-like viewpoint also leads to some redundant dogma: hence coaches

and fathers who exploit the two teenagers are not just men, but "paternalistic, patriarchal males". It also allows her to ignore the obvious fact that these two young men excel at playing basketball. Naturally that talent becomes a focus in their lives and a possible ticket to a better life. But William's and Arthur's experiences no more typify an average youth's than Josh Waitzkin's in *Searching for Bobby Fischer* (UK title: *Innocent Moves*): they share a sought-after talent.

hooks complains that the "spirit of defeat and hopelessness that informs their options in life" is not stressed, then goes on to lament of William's portrayal that "after his health deteriorates he is often represented as hopeless and defeated." Isn't the contradiction obvious?

Concerning hooks' views on competition between Arthur and William, either real or established by the film-makers: there's a difference between counterpoint and competition. Certainly the tumultuous events of each of their lives, especially given the yin-yang synchronicity, add drama and strength to the film, but they served to punctuate a strong theme in the film: with so much riding on their on-court performance, can their lives ever find balance?

Is hooks correct? Does *Hoop Dreams* argue for the nuclear family and religion? Didn't it show a great deal of the pressure on these teenagers coming from their families? Weren't the scenes with religious overtones given some level of ironic presentation? Wasn't Arthur's coach at Marshall one of the best influences on his life at that point? Did anyone leave the theatre thinking Arthur or William attained their childhood dream?

I agree scenes showing Arthur's loss of faith in his dad are sad and moving, but, in point of fact, the film-makers do question Arthur on whether he thinks he might end up going through some of the same troubles as his father. He replies "No," then, "Well, maybe, who knows?" And who can forget the incredible scene of the "Let it rain!" one-on-one basketball game? In a film hooks claims is bereft of a critique of the concept of competition, this seems to me a grim example of where "friendly competition" can take you. If it isn't verbalised eloquently by an 18-year-old, but comes out unrefined on a basketball court, all the better in a film about sports and the American Dream.

Considering how different our takes on the film were, maybe didactic film-making has more merits than I imagined. It's at least difficult to miss a message that's hitting you repeatedly over the head.

Victoria, Canada

## Additions and corrections

April 1995 p.22: In bell hooks' *Dreams of Conquest*, the second paragraph should read: "Now I have no problems with white film-makers making films that focus on black life: the issue is only one of vision-perspective. Living in white-supremacist culture the politics of location matters, no matter who is making a film about people of colour."

**The Chronicle of Cinema 1895-1920**

p.26: (1914 films, Chile) *El Drama del 15 de Octubre* not *The Life of General Rafael Uribe*, 1915 not 1914, Colombia not Chile

**The Chronicle of Cinema, 1980-1995**

p.108: (1982 films, Brazil) *Pura Sangre*, Colombia not Brazil



# Sight and Sound

## Back issues and binders

### Sight and Sound

Most issues dating back to the relaunch of Sight and Sound are available.

● Price per copy including post and packing:  
UK £3.20

Europe £3.60

Overseas airmail £4.90

### Sight and Sound binders

Each binder holds a year's issues.

● Price including post and packing:  
UK £8.00

Europe £9.40

Overseas airmail £12.00

### Monthly Film Bulletin

Many issues are still available dating back to 1970.

● Price per copy including post and packing:  
UK £2.50

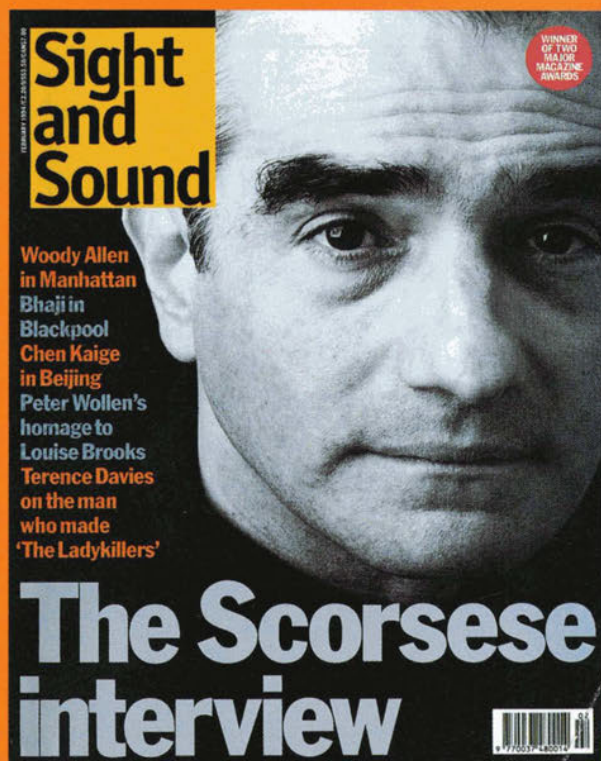
Europe £2.80

Overseas airmail £3.50

### How to order

To order by credit card or for more information call 0858 468888.

To order by post, send your cheque payable to the British Film Institute to:  
Sight and Sound back issues  
Tower House  
Sovereign Park  
Market Harborough  
Leicestershire, LE16 9EF, UK







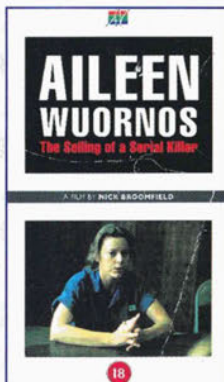
# THE BEST OF WORLD CINEMA ON YOUR DOORSTEP

## FILMS THAT STAND THE TEST OF TIME



### AILEEN WUORNOS - THE SELLING OF A SERIAL KILLER

Nick Broomfield



CAV 030 £15.99

Nick Broomfield's powerful documentary is an account of 'the world's first female serial killer' a prostitute convicted of murdering seven of her clients. The film asks if the serial killer tag was merely a tool to exploit the commerciality of the subject



### FEAR EATS THE SOUL

Rainer Werner Fassbinder

The director's first UK released film and the one which crowned him the leading light of the 'New German Cinema'. It is an uncompromising study of prejudice, racism and ageism resulting from the love affair between an elderly German widow and a young Arab immigrant.

CR 182 £15.99



### LOLA

Rainer Werner Fassbinder

A variation on the Blue Angel, Lola is set in 50's Bavaria and tells the story of a nightclub hostess who seduces a pillar of local society. It is a swinging attack on moral shabbiness and the dubious 'German economic miracle' 'A wonderfully upfront narrative' *Time Out*

CR 184 £15.99

### BEST BOY

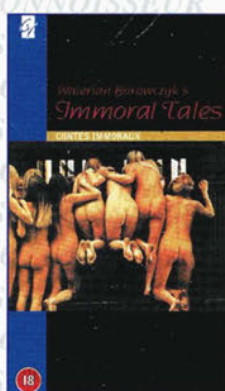
Ira Wohl



CAV 032 £15.99

This amazing, touching film won the Oscar for Best Feature Documentary, and high praise wherever shown. It is the director's account of his cousin Philly, about to leave home for the first time at the age of 52, but with a mental age still in single figures.

'Touching, amusing and ultimately uplifting' *Wall Street Journal*



### IMMORAL TALES

Walerian Borowczyk

Like the Decameron, this erotic work employs a portmanteau format to tell four different stories of sexuality through the ages, leading, unfairly, to the director being labelled an arty pornographer. 'An astute intermingling of erotic impulses with other facets of life' *Variety*

CR 177 £15.99



### BLANCHE

Walerian Borowczyk

Stunningly photographed and designed, the film is set in a remote castle in 13th century France, and revolves around the dark passions aroused by Blanche, the Baron's beautiful young wife. The idyllic surroundings are ultimately stained by lust, jealousy and despair. 'A remarkable film' *Time Out*

CR 176 £15.99

## CONNOISSEUR AND ACADEMY TITLES ARE ALSO

AVAILABLE FROM



AND OTHER LEADING VIDEO STOCKISTS

All these titles are available from **CONNOISSEUR VIDEO LTD** at the mail order price shown plus postage and packing of £1.50 for the first tape and 50p per tape thereafter.

◆ To order any of the videos listed, please tick the appropriate box.

◆ For multiple orders enter the number required in the box. ◆ Credit card bookings only on our Hotline **0171 957 8960**.

◆ A full catalogue of over 100 Connoisseur and Academy titles can be obtained by telephoning **0171 957 8957** during office hours or by leaving your name and address on our credit card hotline. ◆ Prices are inclusive of VAT.

◆ Please allow 28 days for delivery. ◆ Postage rates apply UK only.

**Please cut this coupon and send to: Mail Order Offer,**

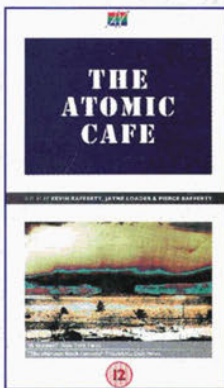
**Connoisseur Video Ltd, 10a Stephen Mews, London W1P 0AX**

Registered in England. Number 246 3593. VAT no. 564 0430 53

*Photocopied coupons are also accepted*

### ATOMIC CAFE

Kevin Rafferty,  
Jayne Loader &  
Pierce Rafferty



CAV 031 £15.99

A painstakingly researched and brilliantly edited compendium of pro-nuclear propaganda from American newsreels, educational material, military footage, adverts, TV shows and pop songs. Humorous and terrifying at the same time, it makes one wonder how the cold war was survived.

'The blackest apocalyptic humour since Dr. Strangelove' *Washington Post*

**AILEEN WUORNOS**

CAV 030 ☐

**BEST BOY**

CAV 032 ☐

**ATOMIC CAFE**

CAV 031 ☐

**FEAR EATS THE SOUL**

CR 182 ☐

**LOLA**

CR 184 ☐

**IMMORAL TALES**

CR 177 ☐

**BLANCHE**

CR 176 ☐

Please tick box(es) for required videos or enter number required for multiple orders of each title

Total order value £\_\_\_\_\_ plus £\_\_\_\_\_ p&p

I enclose a cheque for the total, payable to **CONNOISSEUR VIDEO LIMITED**, or charge my credit card for the total value of £\_\_\_\_\_

☐ Visa ☐ Access (tick box)

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone no. \_\_\_\_\_

Delivery address (if different from above) \_\_\_\_\_

